THE APOCRYPHA
with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books

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Editor

New Revised Standard Version

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INTRODUCTION TO THE APOCRYPHAL/DEUTEROCANONICAL BOOKS

Definitions

As the terms are used in the New Revised Standard Version translation, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books are those works that were included in the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible with additions, or in the Old Latin and Vulgate translations, but are not included in the Hebrew text that forms both the canon for Judaism and the Protestant Old Testament. All of these works, whether they are individual books or additions to the Hebrew texts of Esther and Daniel, have been regarded as canonical by one or more Christian communities, but not by all. (The exception to this is 4 Maccabees, which appears in an appendix to the Greek Bible.)

"Apocrypha" means "hidden things," but it is not clear why the term was chosen to describe these books. It could mean that they were "hidden" or withdrawn from common use because they were viewed as containing mysterious or esoteric teaching, too profound to be communicated to any except the initiated (see 2 Esdras 14.45-46). Or it could mean that such books deserved to be "hidden" because they were spurious or heretical. This ambivalence has continued into the present, although increasingly even scholars from traditions that do not regard these books as canonical consider them of great value for understanding Judaism in the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and thus in the wider contexts, both literary and historical, of the later books in the Hebrew Bible and of the New Testament as well.

"Deuterocanonical," along with its coordinate term "protocanonical," is used in Roman Catholic tradition to describe the status of the two groups of books of the Old Testament. The "protocanon" consists of the books of the Hebrew Bible and the "deuterocanon" of the books whose inspiration came to be recognized later, after the matter had
been discussed among some theologians and local churches. This distinction, introduced by Sixtus of Sienna in 1566, acknowledges the differences between the two categories while making clear that Roman Catholics accept as fully canonical those books and parts of books that Protestants call the Apocrypha (except the Prayer of Manasseh, Psalm 151, 3 and 4 Maccabees, and 1 and 2 Esdras, which both groups regard as apocryphal). Thus, although the terms "Deuterocanonical" and "Apocryphal" can describe the same collection of writings, they clearly indicated the difference in the status of the writings among different groups. In the NRSV translation, subheadings in the table of contents for these books, and in the text itself, explain the differing canonical status of various writings.

The Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Canons of the Old Testament

Toward the end of the fourth century CE, Pope Damascus commissioned Jerome, the most learned Christian biblical scholar of his day, to prepare a standard Latin version of the scriptures (the translation that was to become known as the Latin Vulgate). In the Old Testament Jerome followed the Hebrew canon; though he also translated the apocryphal books, he called attention to their distinct status in prefaces. Subsequent copyists of the Latin Bible, however, did not always include Jerome's prefaces, and during the medieval period the Western Church generally regarded these books as part of the holy scriptures without differentiation. In 1546 the Council of Trent decreed that the canon of the Old Testament includes them (with the exceptions as listed above). Subsequent editions of the Latin Vulgate text, officially approved by the Roman Catholic Church, place these books within the Christian sequence of the Old Testament books. Thus Tobit and Judith come after Nehemiah; the Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus come after the Song of Solomon; Baruch (with the Letter of Jeremiah as Chapter 6) comes after Lamentations; and 1 and 2 Maccabees conclude the books of the Old Testament. Esther is given in its longer (Greek) form rather than in the version based solely on the Hebrew text; the Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Jews appear as vv. 24-90 of ch 3 of Daniel, and the stories of Susanna and Bel and the Dragon as chs 13 and 14 of Daniel. An appendix after the New
Testament contains the Prayer of Manasseh and 1 and 2 Esdras, without implying canonical status.

The Eastern Orthodox Churches recognize several other books as authoritative. Editions of the Old Testament approved by the Holy Synod of the Greek Orthodox Church contain, besides the Roman Catholic Deuterocanonical books, 1 Esdras, Psalm 151, the Prayer of Manasseh, and 3 Maccabees, while 4 Maccabees appears in the Appendix. Slavonic Bibles approved by the Russian Orthodox Church contain besides the Deuterocanonical books, 1 and 2 Esdras (called 2 and 3 Esdras), Psalm 151, and 3 Maccabees.

The Status of the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books in Christianity

During the first centuries of the Common Era, early Christian theologians (most of whom knew no Hebrew) quoted, in Greek, passages both from books in the Hebrew canon and from these additional works without making any distinction between them. Such citations were usually preceded by a word or phrase making it clear that the writer regarded the text being cited as canonical. During this time, only a few thinkers investigated the Jewish canon or distinguished between, for instance, the Hebrew text of Daniel and the addition of the story of Susanna in the Greek version.

By the fourth century, theologians in the eastern (Greek) churches had begun to recognize a distinction between the books of the Hebrew canon and the rest, thought they continued to cite all of them as scripture. During the following centuries the matter was debated and, consequently, practice varied in the East, but at the Synod of Jerusalem in 1672 (which expressed the Orthodox churches' reaction to the Protestant Reformation), Tobit, Judith, Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom, Additions to Daniel, and 1 and 2 Maccabees were expressly designated as canonical.
In the western (Latin) church, on the other hand, though there has been some variety of opinion, in general theologians have regarded these books as canonical. More than one local synodical council (e.g., Hippo, 393, and Carthage, 397 and 419) justified and authorized their use as scripture. The so-called Decretum Gelasianum, a Latin document probably dating to the sixth century, contains lists of the books to be read as scripture and of books to be avoided as apocryphal. The former list, which is not present in all the manuscripts, includes among the biblical books Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and 1 and 2 Maccabees.

Occasionally, however, theologians questioned the status of these books. Jerome, near the end of the fourth century, thought that books not in the Hebrew canon should be classed as apocryphal, and other thinkers, though always a minority, followed his view, at least theoretically. Toward the close of the fourteenth century John Wycliffe and his disciples produced the first English version of the Bible. This translation of the Latin Vulgate included all of the disputed books, with the exception of 2 Esdras. In the Prologue to the Old Testament, however, it makes a distinction between the books of the Hebrew canon, listed there, and others which, the writer says, "shall be set among the apocrypha, that is, without authority of belief." In the books of Esther and Daniel the translators included a rendering of Jerome's notes calling the reader's attention to the additions.

At the time of the Reformation, Protestant thinkers came to the conclusion fairly early that they would need to determine which books were authoritative for the establishment of doctrine and which were not. For instance, disputes over the doctrine of Purgatory and of the usefulness of prayers and Masses for the dead involved the authority of 2 Maccabees, which contains what was held to be scriptural warrant for them (12:43-45). The first extensive Protestant discussion of the canon was Andreas Bodenstein's treatise De Canonicis Scripturis Libellus (1520). Bodenstein (or Carlstadt, after his place of birth) distinguished the books of the Hebrew Old Testament from the books of the Apocrypha, classifying the Apocrypha into two divisions. Concerning Wisdom, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Judith, Tobit, and 1 and 2 Maccabees, he
says, "These are the Apocrypha, that is, are outside the Hebrew canon; yet they are holy writings" (sect. 114). He continues:

What they contain is not to be despised at once; still it is not right that Christians should relieve, much less slake, their thirst with them.... Before all things things the best books must be read, that is, those that are canonical beyond all controversy; afterwards, if one has the time, it is allowed to peruse the controverted books, provided that you have the set purpose of comparing and collating the non-canonical books with those which are truly canonical (§118).

The second group, 1 and 2 Esdras, Baruch, Prayer of Manasseh, and the Additions to Daniel, he declared without worth.

The first Bible in a modern vernacular language to segregate the apocryphal books from the others was the Dutch Bible published by Jacob van Liesveldt in 1526 at Antwerp. After Malachi there follows a section embodying the Apocrypha, which is titled, "The books which are not in the canon, that is to say, which one does not find among the Jews in the Hebrew."

The first edition of the Swiss-German Bible was published in six volumes (Zurich, 1527-29), the fifth of which contains the Apocrypha. The title page of this volume states, "These are the books which are not reckoned as biblical by the ancients, nor are found among the Hebrews." A one-volume edition of the Zurich Bible, which appeared in 1530, contains the apocryphal books grouped together after the New Testament. One Swiss reformer, Oecolampadius, declared in 1530: "We do not despise Judith, Tobit, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, the last two books of Esdras, the three books of Maccabees, the Additions to Daniel; but we do not allow them divine authority with the others."

In reaction to Protestant criticism of the disputed books, on 8 April 1546, the Council of Trent gave what is regarded by Roman Catholics as the definitive declaration on the canon on the canon of the holy scriptures. After enumerating the books, which in the Old Testament include Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, and the two
books of Maccabees, the decree pronounces an anathema upon anyone who "does not accept as sacred and canonical the aforesaid books in their entirety and with all their parts, as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church and as they are contained in the old Latin Vulgate Edition" (tr. Father H.J. Schroeder). The reference to "books in their entirety and with all their parts" is intended to cover the Letter of Jeremiah as chapter 6 of Baruch, the Additions to Esther, and the chapters in Daniel including the Prayer of Azariah, the Song of the Three Jews, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon. It is noteworthy, however, that the Prayer of Manasseh and 1 and 2 Esdras, though included in some manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate, were denied canonical status by the Council. In the official edition of the Vulgate, published in 1592, these three are printed as an appendix after the New Testament, "lest they should perish altogether."

In England, though Protestants were unanimous in declaring that the apocryphal books were not to be used to establish any doctrine, differences arose as to the proper use and place of noncanonical books. A milder view prevailed in the Church of England, and the lectionary attached to the Book of Common Prayer, from 1549 onward, has always contained prescribed lessons from the Apocrypha. In addition, portions of the Song of the Three Jews are used as a canticle, or song of praise, alongside selected Psalms in the service of Morning Prayer. In reply to those who urged the discontinuance of reading lessons from apocryphal books, as being inconsistent with the sufficiency of scripture, the bishops at the Savoy Conference, held in 1661, replied that the same objection could be raised against the preaching of sermons, and that it was much to be desired that all sermons should give as useful instruction as did the chapters selected from the Apocrypha.

The Historical Background to the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books

With the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE, and the subsequent exile of the leading citizens of Judah in Babylon, the history of Israel underwent a decisive break. Henceforth there would always be Jewish communities outside the land of Israel,
and even after the Persian king Cyrus allowed the exiles to return in 538 BCE, large communities flourished in Babylon and elsewhere.

For two centuries the Persians controlled the Near East, but little is known about Jewish history during this time. The Persian period came to an end when Alexander the Great completed a series of conquests that put him in control of Greece, the former Persian Empire, and Egypt. When Alexander died in 323, his empire was divided among his warring generals, and two of them — Seleucus, king of Syria, and Ptolemy, king of Egypt — and their successors fought over the territory of Judah, which fell first under Ptolemaic and then Seleucid dynastic control. Despite the political changes, however, the overall cultural influence remained: This was the era of the triumph of Hellenistic culture, including the use of the Greek language as the standard for the whole empire.

There had already been, in the Hebrew Bible, contention about such issues as intermarriage (Ezra 9.1-10.44; Neh 13.23-31). Now, with large numbers of Jews living outside the land as minorities within much larger and more dominant cultures, this issue and those of other religious observances came to be much more important. Stories of faithfully observant Jews among non-Jewish populations (Tobit, 3 Maccabees) were joined by expanded versions of books that strengthened this point (Greek Esther, the Prayer of Azariah, and Song of the Three Jews in ch 3 of Daniel).

The Seleucid kings increasingly pressured the Jews to adopt Hellenistic ways in their religious observance, and in fact had some success. This effort came to a head under Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164). He installed Hellenizing high priests (Jason and Menelaus), against whom observant Jews rebelled. In response, Antiochus invaded Jerusalem in 169; in 167 he effectively outlawed the Jewish religion, making the teaching of the Torah a crime and establishing polytheistic worship in the Temple. This final provocation led to the ultimately successful Jewish revolt under the Hasmonean family, led by Mattathias and his five sons, one of whom, Judas, was known as Maccabeus, "the hammer." The revolt and the subsequent establishment of a Jewish government (which took more than twenty years to accomplish) are
therefore referred to as Maccabean. This rule lasted for eighty years, until (because of constant power struggles among the various factions of Jews) the Romans were able to intervene and take direct control of the territory in 63 BCE.

Kinds of Literature in the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books

The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books contain several different literary genres, including histories, historical fiction, wisdom, devotional writings, letters, and an apocalypse. Though several of the books combine more than one of these genres, most of the books can be classified as predominantly one or another. Thus 1 Esdras, 1 Maccabees, and, in a certain sense, 2 Maccabees are histories. First Esdras summarizes 2 Chr 35.1-36.23 and reproduces all of Ezra and Neh 7.38-8.12. Only 1 Esd 3.1-5.6 is a significant addition. First Maccabees recounts the history of the Seleucid persecutions and the rebellion and rise of the Maccabees. Second Maccabees, with its bombastic rhetoric and abundant use of invectives against the Seleucid tyrants and Hellenizing Jews, is an example of a popular Hellenistic genre, the "pathetic history," which uses highly charged language, exhortation, exaggeration, and other methods to stimulate the imaginations and emotions ("pathos") of readers. Third Maccabees is misleadingly named: It actually has nothing to do with the Maccabean period or the Seleucid dynasty, but deals with a period a half-century earlier and concerns the sufferings of the Jewish community in Egypt under the Ptolemaic rulers. It is a religious novel, written in Greek by an Alexandrian Jew sometime between 100 BCE and 70 CE. Using legendary elements, it tells three stories of conflict between Ptolemy IV (221-205 BCE) and the Jewish community in Egypt. The most dramatic section (5.1-6.21) describes Ptolemy's scheme to martyr the Jews: They were to be herded into an arena near Alexandria to be trampled under the foot of five hundred intoxicated elephants. The king's plan was finally foiled when angelic intervention terrorized those supervising the persecutions and also frightened the elephants into turning upon the Egyptian soldiers.
Fourth Maccabees is not a historical narrative but rather a Greek philosophical treatise addressed to Jews on the supremacy of reason over the passions of the body and soul. In the form of a Stoic diatribe, or popular address, it uses narratives of exemplary behavior, and the conversations and arguments of character in the narratives, to explore philosophical issues. The author begins with a philosophical exposition of his theme, which he then illustrates at length with examples of the martyrs drawn from 2 Maccabees, who preferred death to committing apostasy. The book was probably written by a Hellenistic Jew before 70 CE. In early Christianity the Maccabean martyrs were venerated as saints and eventually accorded a yearly festival in the ecclesiastical calendar (August 1).

Judith, Tobit, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon are short historical fictions written to convey a moral point, as well as to entertain. Except for Judith, which is set in Judah, the rest are sometimes referred to as "Diaspora novels" since they are all set in the Jewish Diaspora of Mesopotamia. Yet they differ from one another in other respects. Like the canonical stories of Daniel 1-6, Bel and the Dragon are court tales, in which the hero's relationship with the king and other members of the court provides the conflict of the plot. The motif of the lion's den, which occurs in Daniel 6, also occurs in the story of the dragon. In contrast to the earlier Daniel tales, however, Bel and the Dragon is preoccupied with the theme of the exposure of idols as false gods and their priests as fraudulent (see also the Letter of Jeremiah). Bel and the Dragon and Susanna are sometimes referred to as ancient examples of the detective story. Whereas Daniel functioned as an interpreter of dreams and visions in Daniel 1-6, in these stories Daniel uses cleverness and logical deduction to disclose deception.

Although Tobit, like Daniel, is represented as a court official of a Mesopotamian king, the story is concerned with personal and family affairs, not a rivalry at court. Thematically, Tobit maybe be compared with the prose story of Job, since it concerns the suffering of the righteous (both Tobit and his daughter-in-law Sarah). The book of Tobit is distinguished by the use of various folktale motifs (e.g., the motifs of the grateful dead, the angel in disguise, the dangerous bride,
and the demon lover), and by its reference to Ahikar, the hero of a non-Jewish folktale from Mesopotamia.

Judith might seem to bear comparison with 1 and 2 Maccabees, since it concerns a threat to the people from a foreign army. But whereas 1 and 2 Maccabees are histories, the fictional nature of Judith is evident from the story's flagrant historical inaccuracies (describing Nebuchadnezzar as king of Assyria and the invasion as taking place after the people's return from exile!). A better comparison might be between Judith and Esther. Though set in Judah rather than in the Diaspora, Judith, like Esther, tells how a courageous Jewish woman saves her people from enemies bent on destroying them.

Didactic literature is represented in the Apocrypha by the two treatises on wisdom: the Wisdom of Solomon, and the Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach (also known as Ecclesiasticus). Sirach, which was originally composed in Hebrew ca. 180 BCE, shows particularly close connections with the style and content of the book of Proverbs in the Hebrew Bible, from which it is a natural development. The Wisdom of Solomon, by contrast, contains no proverbial material, such as characterizes the Hebrew wisdom tradition. It does, however, share with Proverbs and Sirach an interest in the figure of wisdom personified as a woman. What makes the Wisdom of Solomon distinctive is the strong influence of Greek literary styles and philosophical ideas. Thus, it comes from the Greek-speaking Diaspora, most probably from Alexandria.

The Prayer of Manasseh is a hymnic lament of great feeling and literary skill. The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews are both modeled on psalms that are liturgical in form. In addition to the 150 psalms comprising the Book of Psalms in the Hebrew Bible, during the Hellenistic and Roman periods such hymns were composed in Hebrew and in other languages; there are a number of such compositions in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Another, which celebrates the prowess of young David at slaying Goliath, is appended (as Ps 151) to the Psalter in Greek manuscripts.
The Hebrew Bible contains no books that are in the form of a letter, although letters (or excerpts) occur at various places. There are decrees (Ezra 1.1-6), diplomatic correspondence (1 Kings 5.2-6), royal commands (2 Sam 11.14-15), even forgeries (1 Kings 21.8-10), but all are used to advance the narratives in which they occur, or explain incidents that follow, so it is unclear how representative they are. Twenty-one of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament are in the form of letters, though some (for instance, Hebrews) are more like sermons than letters. The Letter of Jeremiah, which dates from the Hellenistic period, may have provided later, Christian writers with an example of how this literary form could be used for religious purposes, combining theological content with a direct personal approach.

Finally, 2 Esdras, a book that purports to reveal the future, is a specimen of apocalypse. An apocalypse is literally "an unveiling." Like the last six chapters of Daniel in the Hebrew Bible and the book of Revelation in the New Testament, which are also apocalypses, 2 Esdras uses metaphoric language, symbolic numbers and animals (including composites, like the eagle with three heads and numerous wings in ch 11), and angelic messengers who reveal hidden information.

Despite this diversity of genres, most of which parallel or are developed from similar ones in the Hebrew Bible, there is no correlative to classical prophecy. Even within the prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible, apocalyptic elements had already begun to supplant strict prophecy (for instance, Isaiah chs 24-27; Ezekiel chs 38-39; Joel ch 2; Zechariah chs 9-14). This absence perhaps supports the view that Josephus, the Jewish historian, expressed (Ag. Ap. 1.8), that "the exact succession of the prophets" had been broken after the Persian period; a similar idea is found in later rabbinic literature. Sometimes there is a direct statement that "prophets ceased to appear" (1 Macc 9.27); at other times the writers express the hope that prophecy might one day return (1 Macc 4.46; 14.41). When a writer imitates prophetic style, as in the book of Baruch, he repeats with slight modifications the language of the older prophets. But the introductory phrase, "Thus says the LORD," which occurs so frequently in the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible, is absent from the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books.
The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books within Judaism

All of the writings in the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books are Jewish in origin, but it is not clear that they were collected by any particular community of Jews. Some of them (for instance, Sirach) were quoted by the rabbis, but for others no evidence exists that they were regarded as central to the Jewish community at any point. Some (Tobit, parts of Sirach, the Letter of Jeremiah, and Psalm 151) are among the Dead Sea Scrolls, and were therefore presumably of importance to the Essene community there, but whether or not they were considered "canonical" is not clear.

Nevertheless, influences from some of these works are apparent within Judaism. As mentioned above, rabbinic literature quotes and appropriates sayings from Sirach. The martyrdom of the woman and her seven sons (2 Macc 7.1-42; 4 Macc 8.3-18.24) is recounted in several places (Lam. Rab 1. 50; Git. 57b; Seder Eliyahu R 29).

First and Second Maccabees (1 Macc 4.36-59; 2 Macc 10.1-8) provide the original accounts of the purification of the Temple in 164 BCE, which is commemorated in the festival of Hanukkah. The Talmudic legend (Shab. 21b) that oil in the Temple, though only enough for one day, nevertheless burned for eight — the supposed reason for the eight-day length of the observance — is not found in the books of the Maccabees. Judith was, during the Middle Ages, associated with Hanukkah as well, on the grounds that both had to do with rallying an oppressed Jewish population to overthrow a threatening or occupying power.

Both Tobit and 2 Esdras influenced later Jewish literature and were popular during the Middle Ages. Baruch may have been read in synagogues at one time (see Bar 1.14), and Baruch himself, and therefore his writing, were regarded in some rabbinic writings as sharing Jeremiah's prophetic status (Sifre Num 78; Seder Olam R 20; Bab Meg. 14b; Jer Sot. 9.12). Susanna's story is recounted in the Babylonian Talmud (b. San. 93a).

None of the books of the New Testament quote directly from any Apocryphal book, in distinction from the frequent quotation of the thirty-nine books in the Hebrew Bible. On the other hand, several New Testament writers make allusions to one or more apocryphal books. For example, what seem to be literary echoes from the Wisdom of Solomon are present in Paul's Letter to the Romans (cf Rom 1.20-29 with Wis 13.5, 8; 14.24, 27; and Rom 9.20-23 with Wis 12.12, 20; 15.7) and in his correspondence with the Corinthians (compare 2 Cor 5.1, 4 with Wis 9.15). The short Letter of James, a typical bit of "wisdom literature" in the New Testament, contains allusions not only to the book of Proverbs in the Hebrew Bible but to gnomic sayings in Sirach as well (cf Jas 1.19 with Sir 5.11; and Jas 1.13 with Sir 15.11-12).

The Further Influence of the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books

The influence of the Apocrypha has been widespread, inspiring homilies, meditations, and liturgical forms, and providing subjects for poets, dramatists, composers, and artists. Some common expressions and proverbs have come from the Apocrypha. The sayings, "A good name endures forever" and "You can't touch pitch without being defiled," are derived from Sir 41.13 and 13.1. The affirmation in 1 Esd 4.41, "Great is Truth, and mighty above all things" (King James Version), or its Latin form, *Magna est veritas et praevalet*, has been used as a motto or maxim in a wide variety of contexts.

The importance of these books extends to the information they supply concerning the development of Jewish life and thought just prior to the beginning of the Common Era. The stirring political fortunes of the Jews in the time of the Maccabees; the rise of what has been called normative Judaism, and the emergence of the sects of the Pharisees and and Sadducees; the lush growth of popular belief in the activities of angels and demons, and the use of magic to drive away malevolent influences; the first reflections on "original sin" and its relation to the "evil inclination" present in every person; the blossoming of apocalyptic hopes relating to the messiah, the resurrection of the body,
and the vindication of the righteous — all these and many other topics receive welcome light from the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books.
Introduction

Combining ethical exhortation, prayers, and doxologies with broad humor, a rollicking plot, and vivid characters, the book of Tobit is a splendid example of the Jewish novella. In addition to its entertainment value, it offers to historians information about the postexilic period and to theologians a view of a God who test the faithful, responds to prayers, and redeems the covenant community.

The title character, Tobit, was exiled with his wife Anna from the region of Galilee held by the tribe of Naptali. Removed to Assyria, he eventually, like Joseph, Mordecai, and Daniel, found himself in the service of a foreign ruler — in Tobit's case, as an officer of the court of Shalmaneser. This pious Israelite too is tested: First he is removed from his official position and then he is persecuted by Shalmaneser's successor for his insistence on burying the corpses of his fellow Jews. Most ignominious of all: One evening, following yet another burial, Tobit is blinded by a bird with unfortunate aim. Forced to depend on others, including his wife, for support, and following an argument with her in which she questions the value of his piety, Tobit prays for death.

At the same time his relative Sarah is also praying for death. The demon Asmodeus, who has fallen in love with her, has killed each of her seven successive grooms on the wedding night. To resolve these somewhat improbable situations, the angel Raphael will escort Tobit's son, Tobias, first to Media to exorcise the demon and marry Sarah and then back to Nineveh to cure Tobit.

The relatively complex plot is tied together by the parallel situations of older father and bride-to-be, frequent doxologies, almost incessant references to almsgiving, and the shifting of scenes between Nineveh and Ecbatana. The humorous aspects of the tale — from the angel in
disguise to the attack of a magical fish — make the stories of Tobit and Sarah border on the farcical and so prevent the book from becoming tragic or maudlin. Readers familiar with biblical motifs will recognize various genres and themes incorporated in the volume: wisdom sayings, the antipathy between Sarah of Genesis and her maidservant Hagar, the search for a bride for Isaac, the success of the Jew in the royal court, the problems of life in the Diaspora, Job's trials, the role of angels, the centrality of Jerusalem, the fulfillment of prophecy and, especially, the importance of charity. The numerous personal prayers, found also in the stories of Judith, Daniel and the Additions (Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon), the Greek Additions to Esther, and elsewhere in Jewish postexilic literature, emphasize the universal authority and righteousness of God.

The book of Tobit is also replete with information concerning family life, travel, burial and eating customs, gender roles, and medicine. More than mere data, these various matters testify to the author's interest in providing guidance for life in exile: Where Temple sacrifice is unavailable and the people are scattered, the story insists that Jews maintain their identity not only through piety and practice, but also through strong bonds between parents and children, between husbands and wives, and with family members and fellow Jews. To preserve the community, Tobit also insists that his son imitate Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who "took wives from among their kindred" (4.12-13).

In addition to its references to biblical prophecy, characters, and theology, the volume offers connections to well-known folktale motifs, including the dangerous bride, the monster in the nuptial chamber, the supernatural being in disguise, the miraculous animal, and the grateful dead. Specifically mentioned are the characters of Ahikar and his nephew, whose story was well known in antiquity; there may also be some hints of Homer's 'Odyssey.'
Although the original language of the document was likely Aramaic, that text has not survived. The translation below is based on the Greek text of Codex Sinaiticus; other versions include the Old Latin, Jerome's Vulgate, a medieval Aramaic rendering, Coptic, Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, and even fragments in both Hebrew and Aramaic from Qumran (the Dead Sea Scrolls). The book dates to the early postexilic period, likely sometime in the third century BCE; its place of composition remains unknown, with plausible suggestions including the eastern Diaspora, Egypt, and Israel.

[Tobit 1]

Exilic context

1 This book tells the story of Tobit son of Tobiel son of Hananiel son of Aduel son of Gabael son of Raphael son of Raguel of the descendants of Asiel, of the tribe of Naphtali, 2 who in the days of King Shalmaneser of the Assyrians was taken into captivity from Thisbe, which is to the south of Kedesh Naphtali in Upper Galilee, above Asher toward the west, and north of Phogor.

Tobit's background

3 I, Tobit, walked in the ways of truth and righteousness all the days of my life. I performed many acts of charity for my kindred and my people who had gone with me in exile to Nineveh in the land of the Assyrians. 4 When I was in my own country, in the land of Israel, while I was still a young man, the whole tribe of my ancestor Naphtali deserted the house of David and Jerusalem. This city had been chosen from among all the tribes of Israel, where all the tribes of Israel should offer sacrifice and where the temple, the dwelling of God, had been consecrated and established for all generations forever.

5 All my kindred and our ancestral house of Naphtali sacrificed to the calf that King Jeroboam of Israel had erected in Dan and on all the mountains of Galilee. 6 But I alone went often to Jerusalem for the
festivals, as it is prescribed for all Israel by an everlasting decree. I would hurry off to Jerusalem with the first fruits of the crops and the firstlings of the flock, the tithes of the cattle, and the first shearings of the sheep. 7 I would give these to the priests, the sons of Aaron, at the altar; likewise the tenth of the grain, wine, olive oil, pomegranates, figs, and the rest of the fruits to the sons of Levi who ministered at Jerusalem. Also for six years I would save up a second tenth in money and go and distribute it in Jerusalem. 8 A third tenth I would give to the orphans and widows and to the converts who had attached themselves to Israel. I would bring it and give it to them in the third year, and we would eat it according to the ordinance decreed concerning it in the law of Moses and according to the instructions of Deborah, the mother of my father Tobiel, for my father had died and left me an orphan. 9 When I became a man I married a woman, a member of our own family, and by her I became the father of a son whom I named Tobias.

Early captivity

10 After I was carried away captive to Assyria and came as a captive to Nineveh, everyone of my kindred and my people ate the food of the Gentiles, 11 but I kept myself from eating the food of the Gentiles. 12 Because I was mindful of God with all my heart, 13 the Most High gave me favor and good standing with Shalmaneser, and I used to buy everything he needed. 14 Until his death I used to go into Media, and buy for him there. While in the country of Media I left bags of silver worth ten talents in trust with Gabael, the brother of Gabri. 15 But when Shalmaneser died, and his son Sennacherib reigned in his place, the highways into Media became unsafe and I could no longer go there.

16 In the days of Shalmaneser I performed many acts of charity to my kindred, those of my tribe. 17 I would give my food to the hungry and my clothing to the naked; and if I saw the dead body of any of my people thrown out behind the wall of Nineveh, I would bury it. 18 I also buried any whom King Sennacherib put to death when he came fleeing from Judea in those days of judgment that the king of heaven executed upon him because of his blasphemies. For in his anger he put
to death many Israelites; but I would secretly remove the bodies and bury them. So when Sennacherib looked for them he could not find them. 19 Then one of the Ninevites went and informed the king about me, that I was burying them; so I hid myself. But when I realized that the king knew about me and that I was being searched for to be put to death, I was afraid and ran away. 20 Then all my property was confiscated; nothing was left to me that was not taken into the royal treasury except my wife Anna and my son Tobias.

21 But not forty days passed before two of Sennacherib's sons killed him, and they fled to the mountains of Ararat, and his son Esar-haddon reigned after him. He appointed Ahikar, the son of my brother Hanaael over all the accounts of his kingdom, and he had authority over the entire administration. 22 Ahikar interceded for me, and I returned to Nineveh. Now Ahikar was chief cupbearer, keeper of the signet, and in charge of administration of the accounts under King Sennacherib of Assyria; so Esar-haddon reappointed him. He was my nephew and so a close relative.

[Tobit 2]
Tobit's blindness

1 Then during the reign of Esar-haddon I returned home, and my wife Anna and my son Tobias were restored to me. At our festival of Pentecost, which is the sacred festival of weeks, a good dinner was prepared for me and I reclined to eat. 2 When the table was set for me and an abundance of food placed before me, I said to my son Tobias, "Go, my child, and bring whatever poor person you may find of our people among the exiles in Nineveh, who is wholeheartedly mindful of God, and he shall eat together with me. I will wait for you, until you come back." 3 So Tobias went to look for some poor person of our people. When he had returned he said, "Father!" And I replied, "Here I am, my child." Then he went on to say, "Look, father, one of our own people has been murdered and thrown into the market place, and now he lies there strangled." 4 Then I sprang up, left the dinner before even tasting it, and removed the body from the square and laid it in one of the rooms until sunset when I might bury it. 5 When I returned, I
washed myself and ate my food in sorrow. 6 Then I remembered the prophecy of Amos, how he said against Bethel,
   "Your festivals shall be turned into mourning,
   and all your songs into lamentation."
And I wept.

7 When the sun had set, I went and dug a grave and buried him. 8 And my neighbors laughed and said, "Is he still not afraid? He has already been hunted down to be put to death for doing this, and he ran away; yet here he is again burying the dead!" 9 That same night I washed myself and went into my courtyard and slept by the wall of the courtyard; and my face was uncovered because of the heat. 10 I did not know that there were sparrows on the wall; their fresh droppings fell into my eyes and produced white films. I went to physicians to be healed, but the more they treated me with ointments the more my vision was obscured by the white films, until I became completely blind. For four years I remained unable to see. All my kindred were sorry for me, and Ahikar took care of me for two years before he went to Elymais.

The argument

11 At that time, also, my wife Anna earned money at women's work. 12 She used to send what she made to the owners and they would pay wages to her. One day, the seventh of Dystrus, when she cut off a piece she had woven and sent it to the owners, they paid her full wages and also gave her a young goat for a meal. 13 When she returned to me, the goat began to bleat. So I called her and said, "Where did you get this goat? It is surely not stolen, is it? Return it to the owners; for we have no right to eat anything stolen." 14 But she said to me, "It was given to me as a gift in addition to my wages." But I did not believe her, and told her to return it to the owners. I became flushed with anger against her over this. Then she replied to me, "Where are your acts of charity? Where are your righteous deeds? These things are known about you!"
[Tobit 3]
Tobit's prayer

1 Then with much grief and anguish of heart I wept, and with groaning began to pray:
2 “You are righteous, O Lord,
   and all your deeds are just;
   all your ways are mercy and truth;
   you judge the world.
3 And now, O Lord, remember me
   and look favorably upon me.
   Do not punish me for my sins
   and for my unwitting offenses
   and those that my ancestors committed before you.
   They sinned against you,
4 and disobeyed your commandments.
   So you gave us over to plunder, exile, and death,
       to become the talk, the byword, and an object of reproach
       among all the nations among whom you have dispersed us.
5 And now your many judgments are true
   in exacting penalty from me for my sins.
   For we have not kept your commandments
   and have not walked in accordance with truth before you.
6 So now deal with me as you will;
   command my spirit to be taken from me,
       so that I may be released from the face of the earth and
       become dust.
   For it is better for me to die than to live,
       because I have had to listen to undeserved insults,
       and great is the sorrow within me.
   Command, O Lord, that I be released from this distress;
       release me to go to the eternal home,
       and do not, O Lord, turn your face away from me.
   For it is better for me to die
       than to see so much distress in my life
       and to listen to insults.”
Sarah's plight and prayer

7 On the same day, at Ecbatana in Media, it also happened that Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, was reproached by one of her father's maids. 8 For she had been married to seven husbands, and the wicked demon Asmodeus had killed each of them before they had been with her as is customary for wives. So the maid said to her, "You are the one who kills your husbands! See, you have already been married to seven husbands and have not borne the name of a single one of them. 9 Why do you beat us? Because your husbands are dead? Go with them! May we never see a son or daughter of yours!"

10 On that day she was grieved in spirit and wept. When she had gone up to her father's upper room, she intended to hang herself. But she thought it over and said, "Never shall they reproach my father, saying to him, 'You had only one beloved daughter but she hanged herself because of her distress.' And I shall bring my father in his old age down in sorrow to Hades. It is better for me not to hang myself, but to pray the Lord that I may die and not listen to these reproaches anymore." 11 At that same time, with hands outstretched toward the window, she prayed and said,

"Blessed are you, merciful God!
Blessed is your name forever;
let all your works praise you forever.
12 And now, Lord, I turn my face to you,
and raise my eyes toward you.
13 Command that I be released from the earth
and not listen to such reproaches any more.
14 You know, O Master, that I am innocent
of any defilement with a man,
15 and that I have not disgraced my name
   or the name of my father in the land of my exile.
I am my father's only child;
   he has no other child to be his heir;
and he has no close relative or other kindred
   for whom I should keep myself as wife.
Already seven husbands of mine have died.
   Why should I still live?
But if it is not pleasing to you, O Lord, to take my life,
   hear me in my disgrace."

Divine response

16 At that very moment, the prayers of both of them were heard in the
glorious presence of God. 17 So Raphael was sent to heal both of them:
Tobit, by removing the white films from his eyes, so that he might see
God's light with his eyes; and Sarah, daughter of Raguel, by giving her
in marriage to Tobias son of Tobit, and by setting her free from the
wicked demon Asmodeus. For Tobias was entitled to have her before
all others who had desired to marry her. At the same time that Tobit
returned from the courtyard into his house, Sarah daughter of Raguel
came down from her upper room.

[Tobit 4]
Tobit's advice on the family

1 That same day Tobit remembered the money that he had left in trust
with Gabael at Rages in Media, 2 and he said to himself, "Now I have
asked for death. Why do I not call my son Tobias and explain to him
about the money before I die?" 3 Then he called his son Tobias, and
when he came to him he said, "My son, when I die, give me a proper
burial. Honor your mother and do not abandon her all the days of her
life. Do whatever pleases her, and do not grieve her in anything. 4
Remember her, my son, because she faced many dangers for you while
you were in her womb. And when she dies, bury her beside me in the
same grave.
5 "Revere the Lord all your days, my son, and refuse to sin or to transgress his commandments. Live uprightly all the days of your life, and do not walk in the ways of wrongdoing; 6 for those who act in accordance with truth will prosper in all their activities. To all those who practice righteousness 7 give alms from your possessions, and do not let your eye begrudge the gift when you make it. Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. 8 If you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion; if few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have. 9 So you will be laying up a good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity. 10 For almsgiving delivers from death and keeps you from going into the Darkness. 11 Indeed, almsgiving, for all who practice it, is an excellent offering in the presence of the Most High.

12 "Beware, my son, of every kind of fornication. First of all, marry a woman from among the descendants of your ancestors; do not marry a foreign woman, who is not of your father's tribe; for we are the descendants of the prophets. Remember, my son, that Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our ancestors of old, all took wives from among their kindred. They were blessed in their children, and their posterity will inherit the land. 13 So now, my son, love your kindred, and in your heart do not disdain your kindred, the sons and daughters of your people, by refusing to take a wife for yourself from among them. For in pride there is ruin and great confusion. And in idleness there is loss and dire poverty, because idleness is the mother of famine.

Popular wisdom

14 "Do not keep over until the next day the wages of those who work for you, but pay them at once. If you serve God you will receive payment. Watch yourself, my son, in everything you do, and discipline yourself in all your conduct. 15 And what you hate, do not do to anyone. Do not drink wine to excess or let drunkenness go with you on your way. 16 Give some of your food to the hungry, and some of your clothing to the naked. Give all your surplus as alms, and do not let your eye begrudge your giving of alms. 17 Place your bread on the grave of the righteous, but give none to sinners. 18 Seek advice from every wise
person and do not despise any useful counsel. 19 At all times bless the Lord God, and ask him that your ways may be made straight and that all your paths and plans may prosper. For none of the nations has understanding, but the Lord himself will give them good counsel; but if he chooses otherwise, he casts down to deepest Hades. So now, my child, remember these commandments, and do not let them be erased from your heart.

Obtaining funds left in trust

20 "And now, my son, let me explain to you that I left ten talents of silver in trust with Gabael son of Gabrias, at Rages in Media. 21 Do not be afraid, my son, because we have become poor. You have great wealth if you fear God and flee from every sin and do what is good in the sight of the Lord your God."

[Tobit 5]
Raphael's disguise

1 Then Tobias answered his father Tobit, "I will do everything that you have commanded me, father; 2 but how can I obtain the money from him, since he does not know me and I do not know him? What evidence am I to give him so that he will recognize and trust me, and give me the money? Also, I do not know the roads to Media, or how to get there." 3 Then Tobit answered his son Tobias, "He gave me his bond and I gave him my bond. I divided his in two; we each took one part, and I put one with the money. And now twenty years have passed since I left this money in trust. So now, my son, find yourself a trustworthy man to go with you, and we will pay him wages until you return. But get back the money from Gabael."

4 So Tobias went out to look for a man to go with him to Media, someone who was acquainted with the way. He went out and found the angel Raphael standing in front of him; but he did not perceive that he was an angel of God. 5 Tobias said to him, "Where do you come from, young man?" "From your kindred, the Israelites," he replied, "and I have come here to work." Then Tobias said to him, "Do you know the way to go to Media?" 6 "Yes," he replied, "I have been
there many times; I am acquainted with it and know all the roads. I have often traveled to Media, and would stay with our kinsman Gabael who lives in Rages of Media. It is a journey of two days from Ecbatana to Rages; for it lies in a mountainous area, while Ecbatana is in the middle of the plain." 7 Then Tobias said to him, "Wait for me, young man, until I go in and tell my father; for I do need you to travel with me, and I will pay you your wages." 8 He replied, "All right, I will wait; but do not take too long."

9 So Tobias went in to tell his father Tobit and said to him, "I have just found a man who is one of our own Israelite kindred!" He replied, "Call the man in, my son, so that I may learn about his family and to what tribe he belongs, and whether he is trustworthy enough to go with you."

10 Then Tobias went out and called him, and said, "Young man, my father is calling for you." So he went in to him, and Tobit greeted him first. He replied, "Joyous greetings to you!" But Tobit retorted, "What joy is left for me any more? I am a man without eyesight; I cannot see the light of heaven, but I lie in darkness like the dead who no longer see the light. Although still alive, I am among the dead. I hear people but I cannot see them." But the young man said, "Take courage; the time is near for God to heal you; take courage." Then Tobit said to him, "My son Tobias wishes to go to Media. Can you accompany him and guide him? I will pay your wages, brother." He answered, "I can go with him and I know all the roads, for I have often gone to Media and have crossed all its plains, and I am familiar with its mountains and all of its roads."

11 Then Tobit said to him, "Brother, of what family are you and from what tribe? Tell me, brother." 12 He replied, "Why do you need to know my tribe?" But Tobit said, "I want to be sure, brother, whose son you are and what your name is." 13 He replied, "I am Azariah, the son of the great Hananiah, one of your relatives." 14 Then Tobit said to him, "Welcome! God save you, brother. Do not feel bitter toward me, brother, because I wanted to be sure about your ancestry. It turns out that you are a kinsman, and of good and noble lineage. For I knew Hananiah and Nathan, the two sons of Shemeliah, and they used to go
with me to Jerusalem and worshiped with me there, and were not led astray. Your kindred are good people; you come of good stock. Hearty welcome!"

15 Then he added, "I will pay you a drachma a day as wages, as well as expenses for yourself and my son. So go with my son, and I will add something to your wages." Raphael answered, "I will go with him; so do not fear. We shall leave in good health and return to you in good health, because the way is safe." 17 So Tobit said to him, "Blessings be upon you, brother."

Then he called his son and said to him, "Son, prepare supplies for the journey and set out with your brother. May God in heaven bring you safely there and return you in good health to me; and may his angel, my son, accompany you both for your safety."

Before he went out to start his journey, he kissed his father and mother. Tobit then said to him, "Have a safe journey."

Anna's lament

18 But his mother began to weep, and said to Tobit, "Why is it that you have sent my child away? Is he not the staff of our hand as he goes in and out before us? 19 Do not heap money upon money, but let it be a ransom for our child. 20 For the life that is given to us by the Lord is enough for us." 21 Tobit said to her, "Do not worry; our child will leave in good health and return to us in good health. Your eyes will see him on the day when he returns to you in good health. Say no more! Do not fear for them, my sister. 22 For a good angel will accompany him; his journey will be successful, and he will come back in good health."

[Tobit 6] 1a So she stopped weeping.

[Tobit 6, continued]

Dangerous journey

1b The young man went out and the angel went with him; and the dog came out with him and went along with them. So they both journeyed along, and when the first night overtook them they camped
by the Tigris river. 3 Then the young man went down to wash his feet in the Tigris river. Suddenly a large fish leaped up from the water and tried to swallow the young man's foot, and he cried out. 4 But the angel said to the young man, "Catch hold of the fish and hang on to it!" So the young man grasped the fish and drew it up on the land. 5 Then the angel said to him, "Cut open the fish and take out its gall, heart, and liver. Keep them with you, but throw away the intestines. For its gall, heart, and liver are useful as medicine." 6 So after cutting open the fish the young man gathered together the gall, heart, and liver; then he roasted and ate some of the fish, and kept some to be salted.

The two continued on their way together until they were near Media. 7 Then the young man questioned the angel and said to him, "Brother Azariah, what medicinal value is there in the fish's heart and liver, and in the gall?" 8 He replied, "As for the fish's heart and liver, you must burn them to make a smoke in the presence of a man or woman afflicted by a demon or evil spirit, and every affliction will flee away and never remain with that person any longer. 9 And as for the gall, anoint a person's eyes where white films have appeared on them; blow upon them, upon the white films, and the eyes will be healed."

Prenuptial instructions

10 When he entered Media and already was approaching Ecbatana, 11 Raphael said to the young man, "Brother Tobias." "Here I am," he answered. Then Raphael said to him, "We must stay this night in the home of Raguel. He is your relative, and he has a daughter named Sarah. 12 He has no male heir and no daughter except Sarah only, and you, as next of kin to her, have before all other men a hereditary claim on her. Also it is right for you to inherit her father's possessions. Moreover, the girl is sensible, brave, and very beautiful, and her father is a good man." 13 He continued, "You have every right to take her in marriage. So listen to me, brother; tonight I will speak to her father about the girl, so that we may take her to be your bride. When we return from Rages we will celebrate her marriage. For I know that Raguel can by no means keep her from you or promise her to another man without incurring the penalty of death according to the decree of
the book of Moses. Indeed he knows that you, rather than any other man, are entitled to marry his daughter. So now listen to me, brother, and tonight we shall speak concerning the girl and arrange her engagement to you. And when we return from Rages we will take her and bring her back with us to your house."

14 Then Tobias said in answer to Raphael, "Brother Azariah, I have heard that she already has been married to seven husbands and that they died in the bridal chamber. On the night when they went in to her, they would die. I have heard people saying that it was a demon that killed them. 15 It does not harm her, but it kills anyone who desires to approach her. So now, since I am the only son my father has, I am afraid that I may die and bring my father's and mother's life down to their grave, grieving for me — and they have no other son to bury them."

16 But Raphael said to him, "Do you not remember your father's orders when he commanded you to take a wife from your father's house? Now listen to me, brother, and say no more about this demon. Take her. I know that this very night she will be given to you in marriage. 17 When you enter the bridal chamber, take some of the fish's liver and heart, and put them on the embers of the incense. An odor will be given off; 18 the demon will smell it and flee, and will never be seen near her any more. Now when you are about to go to bed with her, both of you must first stand up and pray, imploring the Lord of heaven that mercy and safety may be granted to you. Do not be afraid, for she was set apart for you before the world was made. You will save her, and she will go with you. I presume that you will have children by her, and they will be as brothers to you. Now say no more!" When Tobias heard the words of Raphael and learned that she was his kinswoman, related through his father's lineage, he loved her very much, and his heart was drawn to her.

[Tobit 7]
Tobit and Sarah marry

1 Now when they entered Ecbatana, Tobias said to him, "Brother Azariah, take me straight to our brother Raguel." So he took him to
Raguel's house, where they found him sitting beside the courtyard door. They greeted him first, and he replied, "Joyous greetings, brothers; welcome and good health!" Then he brought them into his house. 2 He said to his wife Edna, "How much the young man resembles my kinsman Tobit!" 3 Then Edna questioned them, saying, "Where are you from, brothers?" They answered, "We belong to the descendants of Naphtali who are exiles in Nineveh." 4 She said to them, "Do you know our kinsman Tobit?" And they replied, "Yes, we know him." Then she asked them, "Is he in good health?" 5 They replied, "He is alive and in good health." And Tobias added, "He is my father!" 6 At that Raguel jumped up and kissed him and wept. 7 He also spoke to him as follows, "Blessings on you, my child, son of a good and noble father! O most miserable of calamities that such an upright and beneficent man has become blind!" He then embraced his kinsman Tobias and wept. 8 His wife Edna also wept for him, and their daughter Sarah likewise wept. 9 Then Raguel slaughtered a ram from the flock and received them very warmly.

When they had bathed and washed themselves and had reclined to dine, Tobias said to Raphael, "Brother Azariah, ask Raguel to give me my kinswoman Sarah." 10 But Raguel overheard it and said to the lad, "Eat and drink, and be merry tonight. For no one except you, brother, has the right to marry my daughter Sarah. Likewise I am not at liberty to give her to any other man than yourself, because you are my nearest relative. But let me explain to you the true situation more fully, my child. 11 I have given her to seven men of our kinsmen, and all died on the night when they went in to her. But now, my child, eat and drink, and the Lord will act on behalf of you both." But Tobias said, "I will neither eat nor drink anything until you settle the things that pertain to me." So Raguel said, "I will do so. She is given to you in accordance with the decree in the book of Moses, and it has been decreed from heaven that she be given to you. Take your kinswoman; from now on you are her brother and she is your sister. She is given to you from today and forever. May the Lord of heaven, my child, guide and prosper you both this night and grant you mercy and peace." 12 Then Raguel summoned his daughter Sarah. When she came to him he took her by the hand and gave her to Tobias, saying, "Take her to be your wife in accordance with the law and decree written in the book of
Moses. Take her and bring her safely to your father. And may the God of heaven prosper your journey with his peace." 13 Then he called her mother and told her to bring writing material; and he wrote out a copy of a marriage contract, to the effect that he gave her to him as wife according to the decree of the law of Moses. 14 Then they began to eat and drink.

15 Raguel called his wife Edna and said to her, "Sister, get the other room ready, and take her there." 16 So she went and made the bed in the room as he had told her, and brought Sarah there. She wept for her daughter. Then, wiping away the tears, she said to her, "Take courage, my daughter; the Lord of heaven grant you joy in place of your sorrow. Take courage, my daughter." Then she went out.

[Tobit 8]
Asmodeus is exorcised

1 When they had finished eating and drinking they wanted to retire; so they took the young man and brought him into the bedroom. 2 Then Tobias remembered the words of Raphael, and he took the fish's liver and heart out of the bag where he had them and put them on the embers of the incense. 3 The odor of the fish so repelled the demon that he fled to the remotest parts of Egypt. But Raphael followed him, and at once bound him there hand and foot.

4 When the parents had gone out and shut the door of the room, Tobias got out of bed and said to Sarah, "Sister, get up, and let us pray and implore our Lord that he grant us mercy and safety." 5 So she got up, and they began to pray and implore that they might be kept safe. Tobias began by saying,

"Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations forever.
Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you forever.

6 You made Adam, and for him you made his wife Eve as a helper and support.
From the two of them the human race has sprung.
You said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone;
let us make a helper for him like himself.'
7 I now am taking this kinswoman of mine,  
    not because of lust,  
    but with sincerity.  
    Grant that she and I may find mercy  
    and that we may grow old together."
8 And they both said, "Amen, Amen." 9 Then they went to sleep for the night.

Raguel's fears are assuaged

But Raguel arose and called his servants to him, and they went and dug a grave, 10 for he said, "It is possible that he will die and we will become an object of ridicule and derision." 11 When they had finished digging the grave, Raguel went into his house and called his wife, 12 saying, "Send one of the maids and have her go in to see if he is alive. But if he is dead, let us bury him without anyone knowing it." 13 So they sent the maid, lit a lamp, and opened the door; and she went in and found them sound asleep together. 14 Then the maid came out and informed them that he was alive and that nothing was wrong. 15 So they blessed the God of heaven, and Raguel said,

"Blessed are you, O God, with every pure blessing;  
    let all your chosen ones bless you.  
    Let them bless you forever.  
16 Blessed are you because you have made me glad.  
    It has not turned out as I expected,  
    but you have dealt with us according to your great mercy.  
17 Blessed are you because you had compassion  
    on two only children.  
    Be merciful to them, O Master, and keep them safe;  
    bring their lives to fulfillment  
    in happiness and mercy."  
18 Then he ordered his servants to fill in the grave before daybreak.

The wedding celebrated and tasks fulfilled

19 After this he asked his wife to bake many loaves of bread; and he went out to the herd and brought two steers and four rams and ordered them to be slaughtered. So they began to make preparations.
20 Then he called for Tobias and swore on oath to him in these words: "You shall not leave here for fourteen days, but shall stay here eating and drinking with me; and you shall cheer up my daughter, who has been depressed. 21 Take at once half of what I own and return in safety to your father; the other half will be yours when my wife and I die. Take courage, my child. I am your father and Edna is your mother, and we belong to you as well as to your wife now and forever. Take courage, my child."

[Tobit 9]

1 Then Tobias called Raphael and said to him, 2 "Brother Azariah, take four servants and two camels with you and travel to Rages. Go to the home of Gabael, give him the bond, get the money, and then bring him with you to the wedding celebration. 4 For you know that my father must be counting the days, and if I delay even one day I will upset him very much. 3 You are witness to the oath Raguel has sworn, and I cannot violate his oath." 5 So Raphael with the four servants and two camels went to Rages in Media and stayed with Gabael. Raphael gave him the bond and informed him that Tobit's son Tobias had married and was inviting him to the wedding celebration. So Gabael got up and counted out to him the money bags, with their seals intact; then they loaded them on the camels. 6 In the morning they both got up early and went to the wedding celebration. When they came into Raguel's house they found Tobias reclining at table. He sprang up and greeted Gabael, who wept and blessed him with the words, "Good and noble son of a father good and noble, upright and generous! May the Lord grant the blessing of heaven to you and your wife, and to your wife's father and mother. Blessed be God, for I see in Tobias the very image of my cousin Tobit."

[Tobit 10]

Anxiety at home

1 Now, day by day, Tobit kept counting how many days Tobias would need for going and for returning. And when the days had passed and his son did not appear, 2 he said, "Is it possible that he has been detained? Or that Gabael has died, and there is no one to give him the
money?" 3 And he began to worry. 4 His wife Anna said, "My child has perished and is no longer among the living." And she began to weep and mourn for her son, saying, 5 "Woe to me, my child, the light of my eyes, that I let you make the journey." 6 But Tobit kept saying to her, "Be quiet and stop worrying, my dear; he is all right. Probably something unexpected has happened there. The man who went with him is trustworthy and is one of our own kin. Do not grieve for him, my dear; he will soon be here." 7 She answered him, "Be quiet yourself! Stop trying to deceive me! My child has perished." She would rush out every day and watch the road her son had taken, and would heed no one. When the sun had set she would go in and mourn and weep all night long, getting no sleep at all.

Return to Nineveh

Now when the fourteen days of the wedding celebration had ended that Raguel had sworn to observe for his daughter, Tobias came to him and said, "Send me back, for I know that my father and mother do not believe that they will see me again. So I beg of you, father, to let me go so that I may return to my own father. I have already explained to you how I left him." 8 But Raguel said to Tobias, "Stay, my child, stay with me; I will send messengers to your father Tobit and they will inform him about you." 9 But he said, "No! I beg you to send me back to my father." 10 So Raguel promptly gave Tobias his wife Sarah, as well as half of all his property: male and female slaves, oxen and sheep, donkeys and camels, clothing, money, and household goods. 11 Then he saw them safely off; he embraced Tobias and said, "Farewell, my child; have a safe journey. The Lord of heaven prosper you and your wife Sarah, and may I see children of yours before I die." 12 Then he kissed his daughter Sarah and said to her, "My daughter, honor your father-in-law and your mother-in-law, since from now on they are as much your parents as those who gave you birth. Go in peace, daughter, and may I hear a good report about you as long as I live." Then he bade them farewell and let them go. Then Edna said to Tobias, "My child and dear brother, the Lord of heaven bring you back safely, and may I live long enough to see children of you and of my daughter Sarah before I die. In the sight of the Lord I entrust my daughter to you; do nothing to grieve her all the days of your life. Go in peace, my child.
From now on I am your mother and Sarah is your beloved wife. May we all prosper together all the days of our lives." Then she kissed them both and saw them safely off. 13 Tobias parted from Raguel with happiness and joy, praising the Lord of heaven and earth, King over all, because he had made his journey a success. Finally, he blessed Raguel and his wife Edna, and said, "I have been commanded by the Lord to honor you all the days of my life."

[Tobit 11]
Tobias returns

1 When they came near to Kaserin, which is opposite Nineveh, Raphael said, 2 "You are aware of how we left your father. 3 Let us run ahead of your wife and prepare the house while they are still on the way." 4 As they went on together Raphael said to him, "Have the gall ready." And the dog went along behind them.

5 Meanwhile Anna sat looking intently down the road by which her son would come. 6 When she caught sight of him coming, she said to his father, "Look, your son is coming, and the man who went with him!"

Tobit is healed

7 Raphael said to Tobias, before he had approached his father, "I know that his eyes will be opened. 8 Smear the gall of the fish on his eyes; the medicine will make the white films shrink and peel off from his eyes, and your father will regain his sight and see the light."

9 Then Anna ran up to her son and threw her arms around him, saying, "Now that I have seen you, my child, I am ready to die." And she wept. 10 Then Tobit got up and came stumbling out through the courtyard door. Tobias went up to him, 11 with the gall of the fish in his hand, and holding him firmly, he blew into his eyes, saying, "Take courage, father." With this he applied the medicine on his eyes, 12 and it made them smart. 13 Next, with both his hands he peeled off the white films from the corners of his eyes. Then Tobit saw his son and threw his arms
around him, 14 and he wept and said to him, "I see you, my son, the light of my eyes!" Then he said, "Blessed be God, and blessed be his great name, and blessed be all his holy angels. May his holy name be blessed throughout all the ages. 15 Though he afflicted me, he has had mercy upon me. Now I see my son Tobias!"

So Tobit went in rejoicing and praising God at the top of his voice. Tobias reported to his father that his journey had been successful, that he had brought the money, that he had married Raguel's daughter Sarah, and that she was, indeed, on her way there, very near to the gate of Nineveh.

16 Then Tobit, rejoicing and praising God, went out to meet his daughter-in-law at the gate of Nineveh. When the people of Nineveh saw him coming, walking along in full vigor and with no one leading him, they were amazed. 17 Before them all, Tobit acknowledged that God had been merciful to him and had restored his sight. When Tobit met Sarah the wife of his son Tobias, he blessed her saying, "Come in, my daughter, and welcome. Blessed be your God who has brought you to us, my daughter. Blessed be your father and your mother, blessed be my son Tobias, and blessed be you, my daughter. Come in now to your home, and welcome, with blessing and joy. Come in, my daughter." So on that day there was rejoicing among all the Jews who were in Nineveh. 18 Ahikar and his nephew Nadab were also present to share Tobit's joy. With merriment they celebrated Tobias's wedding feast for seven days, and many gifts were given to him.

[Tobit 12]
Raphael's revelations

1 When the wedding celebration was ended, Tobit called his son Tobias and said to him, "My child, see to paying the wages of the man who went with you, and give him a bonus as well." 2 He replied, "Father, how much shall I pay him? It would do no harm to give him half of the
possessions brought back with me. 3 For he has led me back to you safely, he cured my wife, he brought the money back with me, and he healed you. How much extra shall I give him as a bonus?" 4 Tobit said, "He deserves, my child, to receive half of all that he brought back." 5 So Tobias called him and said, "Take for your wages half of all that you brought back, and farewell."

6 Then Raphael called the two of them privately and said to them, "Bless God and acknowledge him in the presence of all the living for the good things he has done for you. Bless and sing praise to his name. With fitting honor declare to all people the deeds of God. Do not be slow to acknowledge him. 7 It is good to conceal the secret of a king, but to acknowledge and reveal the works of God, and with fitting honor to acknowledge him. Do good and evil will not overtake you. 8 Prayer with fasting is good, but better than both is almsgiving with righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than wealth with wrongdoing. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold. 9 For almsgiving saves from death and purges away every sin. Those who give alms will enjoy a full life, 10 but those who commit sin and do wrong are their own worst enemies.

11 "I will now declare the whole truth to you and will conceal nothing from you. Already I have declared it to you when I said, 'It is good to conceal the secret of a king, but to reveal with due honor the works of God.' 12 So now when you and Sarah prayed, it was I who brought and read the record of your prayer before the glory of the Lord, and likewise whenever you would bury the dead. 13 And that time when you did not hesitate to get up and leave your dinner to go and bury the dead, 14 I was sent to you to test you. And at the same time God sent me to heal you and Sarah your daughter-in-law. 15 I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand ready and enter before the glory of the Lord."

16 The two of them were shaken; they fell face down, for they were afraid. 17 But he said to them, "Do not be afraid; peace be with you. Bless God forevermore. 18 As for me, when I was with you, I was not acting on my own will, but by the will of God. Bless him each and every day; sing his praises. 19 Although you were watching me, I really did
not eat or drink anything — but what you saw was a vision. 20 So now get up from the ground, and acknowledge God. See, I am ascending to him who sent me. Write down all these things that have happened to you." And he ascended. 21 Then they stood up, and could see him no more. 22 They kept blessing God and singing his praises, and they acknowledged God for these marvelous deeds of his, when an angel of God had appeared to them.

[Tobit 13]
Tobit's hymn

1 Then Tobit said:
   "Blessed be God who lives forever,
    because his kingdom lasts throughout all ages.
2 For he afflicts, and he shows mercy;
   he leads down to Hades in the lowest regions of the earth,
   and he brings up from the great abyss,
   and there is nothing that can escape his hand.
3 Acknowledge him before the nations, O children of Israel;
   for he has scattered you among them.
4 He has shown you his greatness even there.
   Exalt him in the presence of every living being,
   because he is our Lord and he is our God;
   he is our Father and he is God forever.
5 He will afflict you for your iniquities,
   but he will again show mercy on all of you.
   He will gather you from all the nations
   among whom you have been scattered.
6 If you turn to him with all your heart and with all your soul, 
to do what is true before him, 
than he will turn to you 
and will no longer hide his face from you. 
So now see what he has done for you; 
acknowledge him at the top of your voice. 
Bless the Lord of righteousness, 
and exalt the King of the ages. 
In the land of my exile I acknowledge him, 
and show his power and majesty to a nation of sinners: 
'Turn back, you sinners, and do what is right before him; 
perhaps he may look with favor upon you and show you mercy.'
7 As for me, I exalt my God, 
and my soul rejoices in the King of heaven. 
8 Let all people speak of his majesty, 
and acknowledge him in Jerusalem. 
9 O Jerusalem, the holy city, 
he afflicted you for the deeds of your hands, 
but will again have mercy on the children of the righteous. 
10 Acknowledge the Lord, for he is good, 
and bless the King of the ages, 
so that his tent may be rebuilt in you in joy. 
May he cheer all those within you who are captives, 
and love all those within you who are distressed, 
to all generations forever.
11 A bright light will shine to all the ends of the earth; 
many nations will come to you from far away, 
the inhabitants of the remotest parts of the earth to your holy name, 
bearing gifts in their hands for the King of heaven. 
Generation after generation will give joyful praise in you; 
the name of the chosen city will endure forever.
12 Cursed are all who speak a harsh word against you;  
cursed are all who conquer you  
and pull down your walls,  
all who overthrow your towers  
and set your homes on fire.  
But blessed forever will be all who revere you.
13 Go, then, and rejoice over the children of the righteous,  
for they will be gathered together  
and will praise the Lord of the ages.
14 Happy are those who love you,  
and happy are those who rejoice in your prosperity.  
Happy also are all people who grieve with you  
because of your afflictions;  
for they will rejoice with you  
and witness all your glory forever.
15 My soul blesses the Lord, the great King!
16 For Jerusalem will be built as his house for all ages.  
How happy I will be if a remnant of my descendants should survive  
to see your glory and acknowledge the King of heaven.  
The gates of Jerusalem will be built with sapphire and emerald,  
and all your walls with precious stones.  
The towers of Jerusalem will be built with gold,  
and their battlements with pure gold.  
The streets of Jerusalem will be paved  
with ruby and with stones of Ophir.
17 The gates of Jerusalem will sing hymns of joy,  
and all her houses will cry, 'Hallelujah!  
Blessed be the God of Israel!'  
and the blessed will bless the holy name forever and ever."

[Tobit 14] 1 So ended Tobit's words of praise.

Tobit's testament

2 Tobit died in peace when he was one hundred twelve years old, and  
was buried with great honor in Nineveh. He was sixty-two years old  
when he lost his eyesight, and after regaining it he lived in prosperity,
giving alms and continually blessing God and acknowledging God's majesty.

3 When he was about to die, he called his son Tobias and the seven sons of Tobias and gave this command: "My son, take your children and hurry off to Media, for I believe the word of God that Nahum spoke about Nineveh, that all these things will take place and overtake Assyria and Nineveh. Indeed, everything that was spoken by the prophets of Israel, whom God sent, will occur. None of all their words will fail, but all will come true at their appointed times. So it will be safer in Media than in Assyria and Babylon. For I know and believe that whatever God has said will be fulfilled and will come true; not a single word of the prophecies will fail. All of our kindred, inhabitants of the land of Israel, will be scattered and taken as captives from the good land; and the whole land of Israel will be desolate, even Samaria and Jerusalem will be desolate. And the temple of God in it will be burned to the ground, and it will be desolate for a while.

5 "But God will again have mercy on them, and God will bring them back into the land of Israel; and they will rebuild the temple of God, but not like the first one until the period when the times of fulfillment shall come. After this they all will return from their exile and will rebuild Jerusalem in splendor; and in it the temple of God will be rebuilt, just as the prophets of Israel have said concerning it. 6 Then the nations in the whole world will all be converted and worship God in truth. They will all abandon their idols, which deceitfully have led them into their error; 7 and in righteousness they will praise the eternal God. All the Israelites who are saved in those days and are truly mindful of God will be gathered together; they will go to Jerusalem and live in safety forever in the land of Abraham, and it will be given over to them. Those who sincerely love God will rejoice, but those who commit sin and injustice will vanish from all the earth. 8,9 So now, my children, I command you, serve God faithfully and do what is pleasing in his sight. Your children are also to be commanded to do what is right and to give alms, and to be mindful of God and to bless his name at all times with sincerity and with all their strength. So now, my son, leave Nineveh; do not remain here. 10 On whatever day you bury your mother beside me, do not stay overnight within the confines of the
city. For I see that there is much wickedness within it, and that much deceit is practiced within it, while the people are without shame. See, my son, what Nadab did to Ahikar who had reared him. Was he not, while still alive, brought down into the earth? For God repaid him to his face for this shameful treatment. Ahikar came out into the light, but Nadab went into the eternal darkness, because he tried to kill Ahikar. Because he gave alms, Ahikar escaped the fatal trap that Nadab had set for him, but Nadab fell into it himself, and was destroyed. 11 So now, my children, see what almsgiving accomplishes, and what injustice does — it brings death! But now my breath fails me."

**Tobit and Anna die**

Then they laid him on his bed, and he died; and he received an honorable funeral. 12 When Tobias's mother died, he buried her beside his father. Then he and his wife and children returned to Media and settled in Ecbatana with Raguel his father-in-law. 13 He treated his parents-in-law with great respect in their old age, and buried them in Ecbatana of Media. He inherited both the property of Raguel and that of his father Tobit. 14 He died highly respected at the age of one hundred seventeen years. 15 Before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, and he saw its prisoners being led into Media, those whom King Cyaxares of Media had taken captive. Tobias praised God for all he had done to the people of Nineveh and Assyria; before he died he rejoiced over Nineveh, and he blessed the Lord God forever and ever. Amen.
Introduction

Judith, perhaps more than any other biblical book, consistently reverses the reader's expectations. The potent Assyrian army, able to defeat mighty nations both east and west, is routed by the tiny town of Bethulia. Judith, a Jewish widow, so beguiles Holofernes, the invincible head of the Assyrian army, and all his servants and soldiers that she is able to assassinate him in the middle of his camp and sneak away without being caught. The book's characters and scenes resonate with irony, humor, wordplay, suspense, and the unexpected. The story's characters are vividly drawn and take on lives of their own. Judith is an especially compelling figure. She is morally ambiguous: Although pious, faithful, and religiously observant, she lies, seduces, and murders. She is introduced as a traditionally ideal Jewish woman in many aspects: beautiful, well-connected, devoted to God and her late husband; yet it is she, and not the male rulers of Bethulia, who acts to save the town and rallies the people to her cause. She has often been viewed as a model for human liberation, and her courage and complexity have fascinated artists, writers, and composers for centuries.

The book of Judith is a well-crafted work of fiction, an example of the ancient Jewish novel in the Greco-Roman period. Its tone is exaggerated throughout; it contains historical inaccuracies so great that they strike a reader as absurd; and many of the geographical sites, including the principal scene of the action (the town of Bethulia), are unknown. Religion is a primary concern of the book. The plot's central conflict revolves around the question of whether true power lies with Israel's God or with the military might of a foreign ruler. The work provides evidence of traditional religious practices, including prayer, fasting, and observation of dietary laws.
The unity of plot and detail suggests that the book of Judith is almost certainly the work of a single anonymous author. Because the story reflects Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Hellenistic persons and practices, it is difficult to know when the book was originally composed. Most scholars agree that it was written at some point during the Hasmonean dynasty (165-37 BCE). As 1 Clement mentions Judith in the first century CE, it is clear that the book was completed and well known by this time. The geographical setting of the story in Palestine, along with its emphasis upon worship in Jerusalem, may suggest that it was composed by a Palestinian Jew.

The figure of Judith and her mode of operation have been variously compared to the biblical characters of Jael and Deborah (Judg 4.4-5.31), Moses, Esther, Abraham, Delilah (Judg 16), and Woman Wisdom (Prov 8). Yet she also may have been fashioned after the real-life persons Judas Maccabeus (hence her name "Judith") or the popular queen Salome Alexandra. It is probably best to view Judith as a fabricated character, a composite of the traits and activities of many other figures from the Bible and from history.

Although the character after whom the book is named does not appear until ch 8, the first seven chapters establish the narrative themes that frame the entire story: fear, deceit, hearing, blessing, and the proper recipient of worship. Contrasts such as weakness and strength, innocence and guilt, courage and timidity, and godliness and ungodliness should be noted. False appearances and misunderstandings occur regularly; for instance, the Assyrian army only seems strong. Judith's lies are often interpreted as wisdom, and the success of her mission is achieved by means of cosmetic adornment.

The book is divided into two main parts, each with a chiastic structure and thematic repetition. The first part (1.1-7.32), which narrates the Assyrian campaign and revenge against western nations, begins with Nebuchadnezzar's campaign against Arphaxad (1.1-16), his commissioning Holofernes's campaign, the people of other nations surrender (2.14-3.10), and consequently Israel is afraid and Joakim prepares for war (4.1-15). After advising Holofernes, Achior is expelled (5.1-6.11). Then the pattern reverses itself: Achior is received into
Bethulia and advises the Israelites (6.12-21); when Holofernes prepares for war, Israel is afraid (7.1-5); and in the campaign against Bethulia, the people wish to surrender (7.6-32). In the second part Judith accomplishes her victory over the Assyrians (8.1-16.25). Judith is introduced (8.1-8) and plans to save Israel (8.9-10.8). Judith and her servant leave Bethulia (10.9-10), and Judith's stratagem succeeds: She overcomes Holofernes (10.11-13.10a). Then the pattern in part two reverses itself: Judith and her servant return to Bethulia (13.10b-11), Judith plans to destroy Israel's enemy (13.12-16.20), and the narrative concludes with a summary of Judith's remaining life (16.21-25).

[Judith 1]
Nebuchadnezzar is introduced. He declares ware on Arphaxad, the king of Media

1 It was the twelfth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over the Assyrians in the great city of Nineveh. In those days Arphaxad ruled over the Medes in Ecbatana. 2 He built walls around Ecbatana with hewn stones three cubits thick and six cubits long; he made the walls seventy cubits high and fifty cubits wide. 3 At its gates he raised towers one hundred cubits high and sixty cubits wide at the foundations. 4 He made its gates seventy cubits high and forty cubits wide to allow his armies to march out in force and his infantry to form their ranks. 5 Then King Nebuchadnezzar made war against King Arphaxad in the great plain that is on the borders of Ragau. 6 There rallied to him all the people of the hill country and all those who lived along the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Hydaspes, and, on the plain, Arioch, king of the Elymeans. Thus, many nations joined the forces of the Chaldeans.

The Persians and the western nations disregard Nebuchadnezzar's pleas for assistance

7 Then Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, sent messengers to all who lived in Persia and to all who lived in the west, those who lived in
Cilicia and Damascus, Lebanon and Antilebanon, and all who lived along the seacoast, 8 and those among the nations of Carmel and Gilead, and Upper Galilee and the great plain of Esdraelon, 9 and all who were in Samaria and its towns, and beyond the Jordan as far as Jerusalem and Bethany and Chelous and Kadesh and the river of Egypt, and Tahpanhes and Raamses and the whole land of Goshen, 10 even beyond Tanis and Memphis, and all who lived in Egypt as far as the borders of Ethiopia. 11 But all who lived in the whole region disregarded the summons of Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, and refused to join him in the war; for they were not afraid of him, but regarded him as only one man. So they sent back his messengers empty-handed and in disgrace.

Nebuchadnezzar vows revenge upon the western nations and alone defeats Arphaxad

12 Then Nebuchadnezzar became very angry with this whole region, and swore by his throne and kingdom that he would take revenge on the whole territory of Cilicia and Damascus and Syria, that he would kill with his sword also all the inhabitants of the land of Moab, and the people of Ammon, and all Judea, and every one in Egypt, as far as the coasts of the two seas.

13 In the seventeenth year he led his forces against King Arphaxad and defeated him in battle, overthrowing the whole army of Arphaxad and all his cavalry and all his chariots. 14 Thus he took possession of his towns and came to Ecbatana, captured its towers, plundered its markets, and turned its glory into disgrace. 15 He captured Arphaxad in the mountains of Ragau and struck him down with his spears, thus destroying him once and for all. 16 Then he returned to Nineveh, he and all his combined forces, a vast body of troops; and there he and his forces rested and feasted for one hundred twenty days.
Nebuchadnezzar commissions Holofernes to lead a punitive expedition against the disobedient nations

1 In the eighteenth year, on the twenty-second day of the first month, there was talk in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, about carrying out his revenge on the whole region, just as he had said. 2 He summoned all his ministers and all his nobles and set before them his secret plan and recounted fully, with his own lips, all the wickedness of the region. 3 They decided that every one who had not obeyed his command should be destroyed.

4 When he had completed his plan, Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Assyrians, called Holofernes, the chief general of his army, second only to himself, and said to him, 5 "Thus says the Great King, the lord of the whole earth: Leave my presence and take with you men confident in their strength, one hundred twenty thousand foot soldiers and twelve thousand cavalry. 6 March out against all the land to the west, because they disobeyed my orders. 7 Tell them to prepare earth and water, for I am coming against them in my anger, and will cover the whole face of the earth with the feet of my troops, to whom I will hand them over to be plundered. 8 Their wounded shall fill their ravines and gullies, and the swelling river shall be filled with their dead. 9 I will lead them away captive to the ends of the whole earth. 10 You shall go and seize all their territory for me in advance. They must yield themselves to you, and you shall hold them for me until the day of their punishment. 11 But to those who resist show no mercy, but hand them over to slaughter and plunder throughout your whole region. 12 For as I live, and by the power of my kingdom, what I have spoken I will accomplish by my own hand. 13 And you — take care not to transgress any of your lord's commands, but carry them out exactly as I have ordered you; do it without delay."

Holofernes musters an enormous army, attacking and defeating the western nations

14 So Holofernes left the presence of his lord, and summoned all the commanders, generals, and officers of the Assyrian army. 15 He
mustered the picked troops by divisions as his lord had ordered him to do, one hundred twenty thousand of them, together with twelve thousand archers on horseback, 16 and he organized them as a great army is marshaled for a campaign. 17 He took along a vast number of camels and donkeys and mules for transport, and innumerable sheep and oxen and goats for food; 18 also ample rations for everyone, and a huge amount of gold and silver from the royal palace.

19 Then he set out with his whole army, to go ahead of King Nebuchadnezzar and to cover the whole face of the earth to the west with their chariots and cavalry and picked foot soldiers. 20 Along with them went a mixed crowd like a swarm of locusts, like the dust of the earth — a multitude that could not be counted.

21 They marched for three days from Nineveh to the plain of Bectileth, and camped opposite Bectileth near the mountain that is to the north of Upper Cilicia. 22 From there Holofernes took his whole army, the infantry, cavalry, and chariots, and went up into the hill country. 23 He ravaged Put and Lud, and plundered all the Rassisites and the Ishmaelites on the border of the desert, south of the country of the Chelleans. 24 Then he followed the Euphrates and passed through Mesopotamia and destroyed all the fortified towns along the brook Abron, as far as the sea. 25 He also seized the territory of Cilicia, and killed everyone who resisted him. Then he came to the southern borders of Japheth, facing Arabia. 26 He surrounded all the Midianites, and burned their tents and plundered their sheepfolds. 27 Then he went down into the plain of Damascus during the wheat harvest, and burned all their fields and destroyed their flocks and herds and sacked their towns and ravaged their lands and put all their young men to the sword.

The peoples of the seacoast become afraid and surrender

28 So fear and dread of him fell upon all the people who lived along the seacoast, at Sidon and Tyre, and those who lived in Sur and Ocina and all who lived in Jamnia. Those who lived in Azotus and Ascalon feared him greatly.
[Judith 3]

1 They therefore sent messengers to him to sue for peace in these words: 2 "We, the servants of Nebuchadnezzar, the Great King, lie prostrate before you. Do with us whatever you will. 3 See, our buildings and all our land and all our wheat fields and our flocks and herds and all our encampments lie before you; do with them as you please. 4 Our towns and their inhabitants are also your slaves; come and deal with them as you see fit."

Despite the peoples' submission, Holofernes destroys their religious sites

5 The men came to Holofernes and told him all this. 6 Then he went down to the seacoast with his army and stationed garrisons in the fortified towns and took picked men from them as auxiliaries. 7 These people and all in the countryside welcomed him with garlands and dances and tambourines. 8 Yet he demolished all their shrines and cut down their sacred groves; for he had been commissioned to destroy all the gods of the land, so that all nations should worship Nebuchadnezzar alone, and that all their dialects and tribes should call upon him as a god.

9 Then he came toward Esdraelon, near Dothan, facing the great ridge of Judea; 10 he camped between Geba and Scythopolis, and remained for a whole month in order to collect all the supplies for his army.

[Judith 4]
The Israelites become afraid, prepare for battle, and pray

1 When the Israelites living in Judea heard of everything that Holofernes, the general of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of the Assyrians, had done to the nations, and how he had plundered and destroyed all their temples, 2 they were therefore greatly terrified at his approach; they were alarmed both for Jerusalem and for the temple of the Lord their God. 3 For they had only recently returned from exile, and all the people of Judea had just now gathered together, and the sacred vessels and the altar and the temple had been consecrated after their
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profanation. 4 So they sent word to every district of Samaria, and to Kona, Beth-horon, Belmain, and Jericho, and to Choba and Aesora, and the valley of Salem. 5 They immediately seized all the high hilltops and fortified the villages on them and stored up food in preparation for war — since their fields had recently been harvested.

6 The high priest, Joakim, who was in Jerusalem at the time, wrote to the people of Bethulia and Betomesthaim, which faces Esdraelon opposite the plain near Dothan, 7 ordering them to seize the mountain passes, since by them Judea could be invaded; and it would be easy to stop any who tried to enter, for the approach was narrow, wide enough for only two at a time to pass.

8 So the Israelites did as they had been ordered by the high priest Joakim and the senate of the whole people of Israel, in session at Jerusalem. 9 And every man of Israel cried out to God with great fervor, and they humbled themselves with much fasting. 10 They and their wives and their children and their cattle and every resident alien and hired laborer and purchased slave — they all put sackcloth around their waists. 11 And all the Israelite men, women, and children living at Jerusalem prostrated themselves before the temple and put ashes on their heads and spread out their sackcloth before the Lord. 12 They even draped the altar with sackcloth and cried out in unison, praying fervently to the God of Israel not to allow their infants to be carried off and their wives to be taken as booty, and the towns they had inherited to be destroyed, and the sanctuary to be profaned and desecrated to the malicious joy of the Gentiles.

13 The Lord heard their prayers and had regard for their distress; for the people fasted many days throughout Judea and in Jerusalem before the sanctuary of the Lord Almighty. 14 The high priest Joakim and all the priests who stood before the Lord and ministered to the Lord, with sackcloth around their loins, offered the daily burnt offerings, the votive offerings, and freewill offerings of the people. 15 With ashes on their turbans, they cried out to the Lord with all their might to look with favor on the whole house of Israel.
[Judith 5]
Holofernes questions the unique character of the Israelites

1 It was reported to Holofernes, the general of the Assyrian army, that the people of Israel had prepared for war and had closed the mountain passes and fortified all the high hilltops and set up barricades in the plains. 2 In great anger he called together all the princes of Moab and the commanders of Ammon and all the governors of the coastland, and said to them, "Tell me, you Canaanites, what people is this that lives in the hill country? What towns do they inhabit? How large is their army, and in what does their power and strength consist? Who rules over them as king and leads their army? 3 And why have they alone, of all who live in the west, refused to come out and meet me?"

Achior instructs Holofernes by outlining the history of the Israelites

5 Then Achior, the leader of all the Ammonites, said to him, "May my lord please listen to a report from the mouth of your servant, and I will tell you the truth about this people that lives in the mountain district near you. No falsehood shall come from your servant's mouth. 6 These people are descended from the Chaldeans. 7 At one time they lived in Mesopotamia, because they did not wish to follow the gods of their ancestors who were in Chaldea. 8 Since they had abandoned the ways of their ancestors, and worshiped the God of heaven, the God they had come to know, their ancestors drove them out from the presence of their gods. So they fled to Mesopotamia, and lived there for a long time. 9 Then their God commanded them to leave the place where they were living and go to the land of Canaan. There they settled, and grew very prosperous in gold and silver and very much livestock. 10 When a famine spread over the land of Canaan they went down to Egypt and lived there as long as they had food. There they became so great a multitude that their race could not be counted. 11 So the king of Egypt became hostile to them; he exploited them and forced them to make bricks. 12 They cried out to their God, and he afflicted the whole land of Egypt with incurable plagues. So the Egyptians drove them out of their sight. 13 Then God dried up the Red Sea before them, 14 and he led them by the way of Sinai and Kadesh-barnea. They drove out all the people of the desert, 15 and took up residence in the land of
the Amorites, and by their might destroyed all the inhabitants of Heshbon; and crossing over the Jordan they took possession of all the hill country. 16 They drove out before them the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Shechemites, and all the Gergesites, and lived there a long time.

17 "As long as they did not sin against their God they prospered, for the God who hates iniquity is with them. 18 But when they departed from the way he had prescribed for them, they were utterly defeated in many battles and were led away captive to a foreign land. The temple of their God was razed to the ground, and their towns were occupied by their enemies. 19 But now they have returned to their God, and have come back from the places where they were scattered, and have occupied Jerusalem, where their sanctuary is, and have settled in the hill country, because it was uninhabited.

20 "So now, my master and lord, if there is any oversight in this people and they sin against their God and we find out their offense, then we can go up and defeat them. 21 But if they are not a guilty nation, then let my lord pass them by; for their Lord and God will defend them, and we shall become the laughingstock of the whole world."

22 When Achior had finished saying these things, all the people standing around the tent began to complain; Holofernes' officers and all the inhabitants of the seacoast and Moab insisted that he should be cut to pieces. 23 They said, "We are not afraid of the Israelites; they are a people with no strength or power for making war. 24 Therefore let us go ahead, Lord Holofernes, and your vast army will swallow them up."

[Judith 6]
Holofernes denounces Achior and ejects him from the camp

1 When the disturbance made by the people outside the council had died down, Holofernes, the commander of the Assyrian army, said to Achior in the presence of all the foreign contingents:
2 "Who are you, Achior and you mercenaries of Ephraim, to prophesy among us as you have done today and tell us not to make war against the people of Israel because their God will defend them? What god is there except Nebuchadnezzar? He will send his forces and destroy them from the face of the earth. Their God will not save them; 3 we the king's servants will destroy them as one man. They cannot resist the might of our cavalry. 4 We will overwhelm them; their mountains will be drunk with their blood, and their fields will be full of their dead. Not even their footprints will survive our attack; they will utterly perish. So says King Nebuchadnezzar, lord of the whole earth. For he has spoken; none of his words shall be in vain.

5 "As for you, Achior, you Ammonite mercenary, you have said these words in a moment of perversity; you shall not see my face again from this day until I take revenge on this race that came out of Egypt. 6 Then at my return the sword of my army and the spear of my servants shall pierce your sides, and you shall fall among their wounded. 7 Now my slaves are going to take you back into the hill country and put you in one of the towns beside the passes. 8 You will not die until you perish along with them. 9 If you really hope in your heart that they will not be taken, then do not look downcast! I have spoken, and none of my words shall fail to come true."

10 Then Holofernes ordered his slaves, who waited on him in his tent, to seize Achior and take him away to Bethulia and hand him over to the Israelites. 11 So the slaves took him and led him out of the camp into the plain, and from the plain they went up into the hill country and came to the springs below Bethulia. 12 When the men of the town saw them, they seized their weapons and ran out of the town to the top of the hill, and all the slingers kept them from coming up by throwing stones at them. 13 So having taken shelter below the hill, they bound Achior and left him lying at the foot of the hill, and returned to their master.

The Israelites find and rescue Achior, bringing him into Bethulia

14 Then the Israelites came down from their town and found him; they untied him and brought him into Bethulia and placed him before the
magistrates of their town, 15 who in those days were Uzziah son of Micah, of the tribe of Simeon, and Chabris son of Gothoniuel, and Charmis son of Melchiel. 16 They called together all the elders of the town, and all their young men and women ran to the assembly. They set Achior in the midst of all their people, and Uzziah questioned him about what had happened. 17 He answered and told them what had taken place at the council of Holofernes, and all that he had said in the presence of the Assyrian leaders, and all that Holofernes had boasted he would do against the house of Israel. 18 Then the people fell down and worshiped God, and cried out:

19 "O Lord God of heaven, see their arrogance, and have pity on our people in their humiliation, and look kindly today on the faces of those who are consecrated to you."

20 Then they reassured Achior, and praised him highly. 21 Uzziah took him from the assembly to his own house and gave a banquet for the elders; and all that night they called on the God of Israel for help.

[Judith 7]
The Assyrians begin war preparations; the Israelites are again frightened and prepare to fight

1 The next day Holofernes ordered his whole army, and all the allies who had joined him, to break camp and move against Bethulia, and to seize the passes up into the hill country and make war on the Israelites. 2 So all their warriors marched off that day; their fighting forces numbered one hundred seventy thousand infantry and twelve thousand cavalry, not counting the baggage and the foot soldiers handling it, a very great multitude. 3 They encamped in the valley near Bethulia, beside the spring, and they spread out in breadth over Dothan as far as Balbaim and in length from Bethulia to Cyamon, which faces Esdraelon.

4 When the Israelites saw their vast numbers, they were greatly terrified and said to one another, "They will now strip clean the whole land; neither the high mountains nor the valleys nor the hills will bear
Yet they all seized their weapons, and when they had kindled fires on their towers, they remained on guard all that night.

**Holofernes, on the advice of his leaders, decides to seize Bethulia's water supply**

On the second day Holofernes led out all his cavalry in full view of the Israelites in Bethulia. He reconnoitered the approaches to their town, and visited the springs that supplied their water; he seized them and set guards of soldiers over them, and then returned to his army.

Then all the chieftains of the Edomites and all the leaders of the Moabites and the commanders of the coastland came to him and said, "Listen to what we have to say, my lord, and your army will suffer no losses. This people, the Israelites, do not rely on their spears but on the height of the mountains where they live, for it is not easy to reach the tops of their mountains. Therefore, my lord, do not fight against them in regular formation, and not a man of your army will fall. Remain in your camp, and keep all the men in your forces with you; let your servants take possession of the spring of water that flows from the foot of the mountain, for this is where all the people of Bethulia get their water. So thirst will destroy them, and they will surrender their town. Meanwhile, we and our people will go up to the tops of the nearby mountains and camp there to keep watch to see that no one gets out of the town. They and their wives and children will waste away with famine, and before the sword reaches them they will be strewn about in the streets where they live. Thus you will pay them back with evil, because they rebelled and did not receive you peaceably."

These words pleased Holofernes and all his attendants, and he gave orders to do as they had said. So the army of the Ammonites moved forward, together with five thousand Assyrians, and they encamped in the valley and seized the water supply and the springs of the Israelites. And the Edomites and Ammonites went up and encamped in the hill country opposite Dothan; and they sent some of their men toward the south and the east, toward Egrebeh, which is near Chusi beside the Wadi Mochmur. The rest of the Assyrian army encamped in the plain,
and covered the whole face of the land. Their tents and supply trains spread out in great number, and they formed a vast multitude.

**Driven to desperation, the citizens of Bethulia urge the leaders to surrender**

19 The Israelites then cried out to the Lord their God, for their courage failed, because all their enemies had surrounded them, and there was no way of escape from them. 20 The whole Assyrian army, their infantry, chariots, and cavalry, surrounded them for thirty-four days, until all the water containers of every inhabitant of Bethulia were empty; 21 their cisterns were going dry, and on no day did they have enough water to drink, for their drinking water was rationed. 22 Their children were listless, and the women and young men fainted from thirst and were collapsing in the streets of the town and in the gateways; they no longer had any strength.

23 Then all the people, the young men, the women, and the children, gathered around Uzziah and the rulers of the town and cried out with a loud voice, and said before all the elders, 24 "Let God judge between you and us! You have done us a great injury in not making peace with the Assyrians. 25 For now we have no one to help us; God has sold us into their hands, to be strewn before them in thirst and exhaustion. 26 Now summon them and surrender the whole town as booty to the army of Holofernes and to all his forces. 27 For it would be better for us to be captured by them. We shall indeed become slaves, but our lives will be spared, and we shall not witness our little ones dying before our eyes, and our wives and children drawing their last breath. 28 We call to witness against you heaven and earth and our God, the Lord of our ancestors, who punishes us for our sins and the sins of our ancestors; do today the things that we have described!"

**Uzziah advises instead a delay of five days**

29 Then great and general lamentation arose throughout the assembly, and they cried out to the Lord God with a loud voice. 30 But Uzziah said to them, "Courage, my brothers and sisters! Let us hold out for five days more; by that time the Lord our God will turn his mercy to us
again, for he will not forsake us utterly. 31 But if these days pass by, and no help comes for us, I will do as you say."

32 Then he dismissed the people to their various posts, and they went up on the walls and towers of their town. The women and children he sent home. In the town they were in great misery.

[Judith 8]
Judith is introduced

1 Now in those days Judith heard about these things: she was the daughter of Merari son of Ox son of Joseph son of Oziel son of Elkiah son of Ananias son of Gideon son of Raphain son of Ahitub son of Elijah son of Hilkiah son of Eliab son of Nathanael son of Salamiel son of Sarasadai son of Israel. 2 Her husband Manasseh, who belonged to her tribe and family, had died during the barley harvest. 3 For as he stood overseeing those who were binding sheaves in the field, he was overcome by the burning heat, and took to his bed and died in his town Bethulia. So they buried him with his ancestors in the field between Dothan and Balamon. 4 Judith remained as a widow for three years and four months 5 at home where she set up a tent for herself on the roof of her house. She put sackcloth around her waist and dressed in widow's clothing. 6 She fasted all the days of her widowhood, except the day before the sabbath and the sabbath itself, the day before the new moon and the day of the new moon, and the festivals and days of rejoicing of the house of Israel. 7 She was beautiful in appearance, and was very lovely to behold. Her husband Manasseh had left her gold and silver, men and women slaves, livestock, and fields; and she maintained this estate. 8 No one spoke ill of her, for she feared God with great devotion.

Judith upbraids the Bethulian leaders

9 When Judith heard the harsh words spoken by the people against the ruler, because they were faint for lack of water, and when she heard all that Uzziah said to them, and how he promised them under oath to surrender the town to the Assyrians after five days, 10 she sent her maid, who was in charge of all she possessed, to summon Uzziah and
Chabris and Charmis, the elders of her town. 11 They came to her, and she said to them:

"Listen to me, rulers of the people of Bethulia! What you have said to the people today is not right; you have even sworn and pronounced this oath between God and you, promising to surrender the town to our enemies unless the Lord turns and helps us within so many days. 12 Who are you to put God to the test today, and to set yourselves up in the place of God in human affairs? 13 You are putting the Lord Almighty to the test, but you will never learn anything! 14 You cannot plumb the depths of the human heart or understand the workings of the human mind; how do you expect to search out God, who made all these things, and find out his mind or comprehend his thought? No, my brothers, do not anger the Lord our God. 15 For if he does not choose to help us within these five days, he has power to protect us within any time he pleases, or even to destroy us in the presence of our enemies. 16 Do not try to bind the purposes of the Lord our God; for God is not like a human being, to be threatened, or like a mere mortal, to be won over by pleading. 17 Therefore, while we wait for his deliverance, let us call upon him to help us, and he will hear our voice, if it pleases him.

18 "For never in our generation, nor in these present days, has there been any tribe or family or people or town of ours that worships gods made with hands, as was done in days gone by. 19 That was why our ancestors were handed over to the sword and to pillage, and so they suffered a great catastrophe before our enemies. 20 But we know no other god but him, and so we hope that he will not disdain us or any of our nation. 21 For if we are captured, all Judea will be captured and our sanctuary will be plundered; and he will make us pay for its desecration with our blood. 22 The slaughter of our kindred and the captivity of the land and the desolation of our inheritance — all this he will bring on our heads among the Gentiles, wherever we serve as slaves; and we shall be an offense and a disgrace in the eyes of those who acquire us. 23 For our slavery will not bring us into favor, but the Lord our God will turn it to dishonor.
24 "Therefore, my brothers, let us set an example for our kindred, for their lives depend upon us, and the sanctuary — both the temple and the altar — rests upon us. 25 In spite of everything let us give thanks to the Lord our God, who is putting us to the test as he did our ancestors. 26 Remember what he did with Abraham, and how he tested Isaac, and what happened to Jacob in Syrian Mesopotamia, while he was tending the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother. 27 For he has not tried us with fire, as he did them, to sear their hearts, nor has he taken vengeance on us; but the Lord scourges those who are close to him in order to admonish them."

The leaders acknowledge Judith's wisdom and she vows to deliver the city

28 Then Uzziah said to her, "All that you have said was spoken out of a true heart, and there is no one who can deny your words. 29 Today is not the first time your wisdom has been shown, but from the beginning of your life all the people have recognized your understanding, for your heart's disposition is right. 30 But the people were so thirsty that they compelled us to do for them what we have promised, and made us take an oath that we cannot break. 31 Now since you are a God-fearing woman, pray for us, so that the Lord may send us rain to fill our cisterns. Then we will no longer feel faint from thirst."

32 Then Judith said to them, "Listen to me. I am about to do something that will go down through all generations of our descendants. 33 Stand at the town gate tonight so that I may go out with my maid; and within the days after which you have promised to surrender the town to our enemies, the Lord will deliver Israel by my hand. 34 Only, do not try to find out what I am doing; for I will not tell you until I have finished what I am about to do."

35 Uzziah and the rulers said to her, "Go in peace, and may the Lord God go before you, to take vengeance on our enemies." 36 So they returned from the tent and went to their posts.
[Judith 9]
The Prayer of Judith

1 Then Judith prostrated herself, put ashes on her head, and uncovered the sackcloth she was wearing. At the very time when the evening incense was being offered in the house of God in Jerusalem, Judith cried out to the Lord with a loud voice, and said,

2 "O Lord God of my ancestor Simeon, to whom you gave a sword to take revenge on those strangers who had torn off a virgin's clothing to defile her, and exposed her thighs to put her to shame, and polluted her womb to disgrace her; for you said, 'It shall not be done' — yet they did it; 3 so you gave up their rulers to be killed, and their bed, which was ashamed of the deceit they had practiced, was stained with blood, and you struck down slaves along with princes, and princes on their thrones. 4 You gave up their wives for booty and their daughters to captivity, and all their booty to be divided among your beloved children who burned with zeal for you and abhorred the pollution of their blood and called on you for help. O God, my God, hear me also, a widow.

5 "For you have done these things and those that went before and those that followed. You have designed the things that are now, and those that are to come. What you had in mind has happened; 6 the things you decided on presented themselves and said, 'Here we are!' For all your ways are prepared in advance, and your judgment is with foreknowledge.

7 "Here now are the Assyrians, a greatly increased force, priding themselves in their horses and riders, boasting in the strength of their foot soldiers, and trusting in shield and spear, in bow and sling. They do not know that you are the Lord who crushes wars; the Lord is your name. 8 Break their strength by your might, and bring down their power in your anger; for they intend to defile your sanctuary, and to pollute the tabernacle where your glorious name resides, and to break off the horns of your altar with the sword. 9 Look at their pride, and send your wrath upon their heads. Give to me, a widow, the strong hand to do what I plan. 10 By the deceit of my lips strike down the
slave with the prince and the prince with his servant; crush their arrogance by the hand of a woman.

11 "For your strength does not depend on numbers, nor your might on the powerful. But you are the God of the lowly, helper of the oppressed, upholder of the weak, protector of the forsaken, savior of those without hope. 12 Please, please, God of my father, God of the heritage of Israel, Lord of heaven and earth, Creator of the waters, King of all your creation, hear my prayer! 13 Make my deceitful words bring wound and bruise on those who have planned cruel things against your covenant, and against your sacred house, and against Mount Zion, and against the house your children possess. 14 Let your whole nation and every tribe know and understand that you are God, the God of all power and might, and that there is no other who protects the people of Israel but you alone!"

[Judith 10]
Judith bastes and dresses in preparation for her mission

1 When Judith had stopped crying out to the God of Israel, and had ended all these words, 2 she rose from where she lay prostrate. She called her maid and went down into the house where she lived on sabbaths and on her festal days. 3 She removed the sackcloth she had been wearing, took off her widow's garments, bathed her body with water, and anointed herself with precious ointment. She combed her hair, put on a tiara, and dressed herself in the festive attire that she used to wear while her husband Manasseh was living. 4 She put sandals on her feet, and put on her anklets, bracelets, rings, earrings, and all her other jewelry. Thus she made herself very beautiful, to entice the eyes of all the men who might see her. 5 She gave her maid a skin of wine and a flask of oil, and filled a bag with roasted grain, dried fig cakes, and fine bread; then she wrapped up all her dishes and gave them to her to carry.

The elders bless Judith and she and her servant leave Bethulia

6 Then they went out to the town gate of Bethulia and found Uzziah standing there with the elders of the town, Chabris and Charmis.
When they saw her transformed in appearance and dressed differently, they were very greatly astounded at her beauty and said to her, 8 "May the God of our ancestors grant you favor and fulfill your plans, so that the people of Israel may glory and Jerusalem may be exalted." She bowed down to God.

9 Then she said to them, "Order the gate of the town to be opened for me so that I may go out and accomplish the things you have just said to me." So they ordered the young men to open the gate for her, as she requested. 10 When they had done this, Judith went out, accompanied by her maid. The men of the town watched her until she had gone down the mountain and passed through the valley, where they lost sight of her.

The two women are captured by the Assyrians and brought to Holofernes

11 As the women were going straight on through the valley, an Assyrian patrol met her 12 and took her into custody. They asked her, "To what people do you belong, and where are you coming from, and where are you going?" She replied, "I am a daughter of the Hebrews, but I am fleeing from them, for they are about to be handed over to you to be devoured. 13 I am on my way to see Holofernes the commander of your army, to give him a true report; I will show him a way by which he can go and capture all the hill country without losing one of his men, captured or slain."

14 When the men heard her words, and observed her face — she was in their eyes marvelously beautiful — they said to her, 15 "You have saved your life by hurrying down to see our lord. Go at once to his tent; some of us will escort you and hand you over to him. 16 When you stand before him, have no fear in your heart, but tell him what you have just said, and he will treat you well."

17 They chose from their number a hundred men to accompany her and her maid, and they brought them to the tent of Holofernes. 18 There was great excitement in the whole camp, for her arrival was reported from tent to tent. They came and gathered around her as she stood
outside the tent of Holofernes, waiting until they told him about her. 19 They marveled at her beauty and admired the Israelites, judging them by her. They said to one another, "Who can despise these people, who have women like this among them? It is not wise to leave one of their men alive, for if we let them go they will be able to beguile the whole world!"

20 Then the guards of Holofernes and all his servants came out and led her into the tent. 21 Holofernes was resting on his bed under a canopy that was woven with purple and gold, emeralds and other precious stones. 22 When they told him of her, he came to the front of the tent, with silver lamps carried before him. 23 When Judith came into the presence of Holofernes and his servants, they all marveled at the beauty of her face. She prostrated herself and did obeisance to him, but his slaves raised her up.

[Judith 11]
Holofernes welcomes Judith

1 Then Holofernes said to her, "Take courage, woman, and do not be afraid in your heart, for I have never hurt anyone who chose to serve Nebuchadnezzar, king of all the earth. 2 Even now, if your people who live in the hill country had not slighted me, I would never have lifted my spear against them. They have brought this on themselves. 3 But now tell me why you have fled from them and have come over to us. In any event, you have come to safety. Take courage! You will live tonight and ever after. 4 No one will hurt you. Rather, all will treat you well, as they do the servants of my lord King Nebuchadnezzar."

Judith's explanation of her departure commends her to Holofernes and his advisors

5 Judith answered him, "Accept the words of your slave, and let your servant speak in your presence. I will say nothing false to my lord this night. 6 If you follow out the words of your servant, God will accomplish something through you, and my lord will not fail to achieve his purposes. 7 By the life of Nebuchadnezzar, king of the whole earth, and by the power of him who has sent you to direct every living being!
Not only do human beings serve him because of you, but also the animals of the field and the cattle and the birds of the air will live, because of your power, under Nebuchadnezzar and all his house. 8 For we have heard of your wisdom and skill, and it is reported throughout the whole world that you alone are the best in the whole kingdom, the most informed and the most astounding in military strategy.

9 "Now as for Achior's speech in your council, we have heard his words, for the people of Bethulia spared him and he told them all he had said to you. 10 Therefore, lord and master, do not disregard what he said, but keep it in your mind, for it is true. Indeed our nation cannot be punished, nor can the sword prevail against them, unless they sin against their God.

11 "But now, in order that my lord may not be defeated and his purpose frustrated, death will fall upon them, for a sin has overtaken them by which they are about to provoke their God to anger when they do what is wrong. 12 Since their food supply is exhausted and their water has almost given out, they have planned to kill their livestock and have determined to use all that God by his laws has forbidden them to eat. 13 They have decided to consume the first fruits of the grain and the tithes of the wine and oil, which they had consecrated and set aside for the priests who minister in the presence of our God in Jerusalem — things it is not lawful for any of the people even to touch with their hands. 14 Since even the people in Jerusalem have been doing this, they have sent messengers there in order to bring back permission from the council of the elders. 15 When the response reaches them and they act upon it, on that very day they will be handed over to you to be destroyed.

16 "So when I, your slave, learned all this, I fled from them. God has sent me to accomplish with you things that will astonish the whole world wherever people shall hear about them. 17 Your servant is indeed God-fearing and serves the God of heaven night and day. So, my lord, I will remain with you; but every night your servant will go out into the valley and pray to God. He will tell me when they have committed their sins. 18 Then I will come and tell you, so that you may go out with your whole army, and not one of them will be able to
withstand you. 19 Then I will lead you through Judea, until you come to Jerusalem; there I will set your throne. You will drive them like sheep that have no shepherd, and no dog will so much as growl at you. For this was told me to give me foreknowledge; it was announced to me, and I was sent to tell you."

20 Her words pleased Holofernes and all his servants. They marveled at her wisdom and said, 21 "No other woman from one end of the earth to the other looks so beautiful or speaks so wisely!" 22 Then Holofernes said to her, "God has done well to send you ahead of the people, to strengthen our hands and bring destruction on those who have despised my lord. 23 You are not only beautiful in appearance, but wise in speech. If you do as you have said, your God shall be my God, and you shall live in the palace of King Nebuchadnezzar and be renowned throughout the whole world."

[Judith 12]
Judith establishes a pattern of leaving the camp for prayer

1 Then he commanded them to bring her in where his silver dinnerware was kept, and ordered them to set a table for her with some of his own delicacies, and with some of his own wine to drink. 2 But Judith said, "I cannot partake of them, or it will be an offense; but I will have enough with the things I brought with me." 3 Holofernes said to her, "If your supply runs out, where can we get you more of the same? For none of your people are here with us." 4 Judith replied, "As surely as you live, my lord, your servant will not use up the supplies I have with me before the Lord carries out by my hand what he has determined." 5 Then the servants of Holofernes brought her into the tent, and she slept until midnight. Toward the morning watch she got up 6 and sent this message to Holofernes: "Let my lord now give orders to allow your servant to go out and pray." 7 So Holofernes commanded his guards not to hinder her. She remained in the camp three days. She went out each night to the valley of Bethulia, and bathed at the spring in the camp. 8 After bathing, she prayed the Lord God of Israel to direct her way for the triumph of his people. 9 Then she returned purified and stayed in the tent until she ate her food toward evening.
Holofernes invites Judith to a banquet

10 On the fourth day Holofernes held a banquet for his personal attendants only, and did not invite any of his officers. 11 He said to Bagoas, the eunuch who had charge of his personal affairs, "Go and persuade the Hebrew woman who is in your care to join us and to eat and drink with us. 12 For it would be a disgrace if we let such a woman go without having intercourse with her. If we do not seduce her, she will laugh at us."

13 So Bagoas left the presence of Holofernes, and approached her and said, "Let this pretty girl not hesitate to come to my lord to be honored in his presence, and to enjoy drinking wine with us, and to become today like one of the Assyrian women who serve in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar." 14 Judith replied, "Who am I to refuse my lord? Whatever pleases him I will do at once, and it will be a joy to me until the day of my death." 15 So she proceeded to dress herself in all her woman's finery. Her maid went ahead and spread for her on the ground before Holofernes the lambskins she had received from Bagoas for her daily use in reclining.

16 Then Judith came in and lay down. Holofernes' heart was ravished with her and his passion was aroused, for he had been waiting for an opportunity to seduce her from the day he first saw her. 17 So Holofernes said to her, "Have a drink and be merry with us!" 18 Judith said, "I will gladly drink, my lord, because today is the greatest day in my whole life." 19 Then she took what her maid had prepared and ate and drank before him. 20 Holofernes was greatly pleased with her, and drank a great quantity of wine, much more than he had ever drunk in any one day since he was born.

[Judith 13]
Judith, alone with Holofernes, decapitates him

1 When evening came, his slaves quickly withdrew. Bagoas closed the tent from outside and shut out the attendants from his master's presence. They went to bed, for they all were weary because the
banquet had lasted so long. But Judith was left alone in the tent, with Holofernes stretched out on his bed, for he was dead drunk.

Now Judith had told her maid to stand outside the bedchamber and to wait for her to come out, as she did on the other days; for she said she would be going out for her prayers. She had said the same thing to Bagoas. So everyone went out, and no one, either small or great, was left in the bedchamber. Then Judith, standing beside his bed, said in her heart, "O Lord God of all might, look in this hour on the work of my hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem. Now indeed is the time to help your heritage and to carry out my design to destroy the enemies who have risen up against us."

She went up to the bedpost near Holofernes' head, and took down his sword that hung there. She came close to his bed, took hold of the hair of his head, and said, "Give me strength today, O Lord God of Israel!" Then she struck his neck twice with all her might, and cut off his head. Next she rolled his body off the bed and pulled down the canopy from the posts. Soon afterward she went out and gave Holofernes' head to her maid, who placed it in her food bag.

**Judith flees the enemy camp and returns to Bethulia**

Then the two of them went out together, as they were accustomed to do for prayer. They passed through the camp, circled around the valley, and went up the mountain to Bethulia, and came to its gates. From a distance Judith called out to the sentries at the gates, "Open, open the gate! God, our God, is with us, still showing his power in Israel and his strength against our enemies, as he has done today!"

When the people of her town heard her voice, they hurried down to the town gate and summoned the elders of the town. They all ran together, both small and great, for it seemed unbelievable that she had returned. They opened the gate and welcomed them. Then they lit a fire to give light, and gathered around them. Then she said to them with a loud voice, "Praise God, O praise him! Praise God, who has not withdrawn his mercy from the house of Israel, but has destroyed our enemies by my hand this very night!"
15 Then she pulled the head out of the bag and showed it to them, and said, "See here, the head of Holofernes, the commander of the Assyrian army, and here is the canopy beneath which he lay in his drunken stupor. The Lord has struck him down by the hand of a woman. 16 As the Lord lives, who has protected me in the way I went, I swear that it was my face that seduced him to his destruction, and that he committed no sin with me, to defile and shame me."

17 All the people were greatly astonished. They bowed down and worshiped God, and said with one accord, "Blessed are you our God, who have this day humiliated the enemies of your people."

18 Then Uzziah said to her, "O daughter, you are blessed by the Most High God above all other women on earth; and blessed be the Lord God, who created the heavens and the earth, who has guided you to cut off the head of the leader of our enemies. 19 Your praise will never depart from the hearts of those who remember the power of God. 20 May God grant this to be a perpetual honor to you, and may he reward you with blessings, because you risked your own life when our nation was brought low, and you averted our ruin, walking in the straight path before our God." And all the people said, "Amen. Amen."

[Judith 14]
Judith directs the Israelites' military strategy

1 Then Judith said to them, "Listen to me, my friends. Take this head and hang it upon the parapet of your wall. 2 As soon as day breaks and the sun rises on the earth, each of you take up your weapons, and let every able-bodied man go out of the town; set a captain over them, as if you were going down to the plain against the Assyrian outpost; only do not go down. 3 Then they will seize their arms and go into the camp and rouse the officers of the Assyrian army. They will rush into the tent of Holofernes and will not find him. Then panic will come over them, and they will flee before you. 4 Then you and all who live within the borders of Israel will pursue them and cut them down in their tracks. 5 But before you do all this, bring Achior the Ammonite to me so that he may see and recognize the man who despised the house of Israel and sent him to us as if to his death."
Achior identifies the head of Holofernes and converts

6 So they summoned Achior from the house of Uzziah. When he came and saw the head of Holofernes in the hand of one of the men in the assembly of the people, he fell down on his face in a faint. 7 When they raised him up he threw himself at Judith's feet, and did obeisance to her, and said, "Blessed are you in every tent of Judah! In every nation those who hear your name will be alarmed. 8 Now tell me what you have done during these days."

So Judith told him in the presence of the people all that she had done, from the day she left until the moment she began speaking to them. 9 When she had finished, the people raised a great shout and made a joyful noise in their town. 10 When Achior saw all that the God of Israel had done, he believed firmly in God. So he was circumcised, and joined the house of Israel, remaining so to this day.

The enemy discovers Holofernes's death

11 As soon as it was dawn they hung the head of Holofernes on the wall. Then they all took their weapons, and they went out in companies to the mountain passes. 12 When the Assyrians saw them they sent word to their commanders, who then went to the generals and the captains and to all their other officers. 13 They came to Holofernes' tent and said to the steward in charge of all his personal affairs, "Wake up our lord, for the slaves have been so bold as to come down against us to give battle, to their utter destruction."

14 So Bagoas went in and knocked at the entry of the tent, for he supposed that he was sleeping with Judith. 15 But when no one answered, he opened it and went into the bedchamber and found him sprawled on the floor dead, with his head missing. 16 He cried out with a loud voice and wept and groaned and shouted, and tore his clothes. 17 Then he went to the tent where Judith had stayed, and when he did not find her, he rushed out to the people and shouted, 18 "The slaves have tricked us! One Hebrew woman has brought disgrace on the house of King Nebuchadnezzar. Look, Holofernes is lying on the ground, and his head is missing!"
19 When the leaders of the Assyrian army heard this, they tore their tunics and were greatly dismayed, and their loud cries and shouts rose up throughout the camp.

[Judith 15]
The Assyrians flee in panic; the Israelites follow and lay waste to them

1 When the men in the tents heard it, they were amazed at what had happened. 2 Overcome with fear and trembling, they did not wait for one another, but with one impulse all rushed out and fled by every path across the plain and through the hill country. 3 Those who had camped in the hills around Bethulia also took to flight. Then the Israelites, everyone that was a soldier, rushed out upon them. 4 Uzziah sent men to Betomasthaim and Choba and Kola, and to all the frontiers of Israel, to tell what had taken place and to urge all to rush out upon the enemy to destroy them. 5 When the Israelites heard it, with one accord they fell upon the enemy, and cut them down as far as Choba. Those in Jerusalem and all the hill country also came, for they were told what had happened in the camp of the enemy. The men in Gilead and in Galilee outflanked them with great slaughter, even beyond Damascus and its borders. 6 The rest of the people of Bethulia fell upon the Assyrian camp and plundered it, acquiring great riches. 7 And the Israelites, when they returned from the slaughter, took possession of what remained. Even the villages and towns in the hill country and in the plain got a great amount of booty, since there was a vast quantity of it.

Judith is honored and leads in triumph to Jerusalem

8 Then the high priest Joakim and the elders of the Israelites who lived in Jerusalem came to witness the good things that the Lord had done for Israel, and to see Judith and to wish her well. 9 When they met her, they all blessed her with one accord and said to her, "You are the glory of Jerusalem, you are the great boast of Israel, you are the great pride of our nation! 10 You have done all this with your own hand; you have done great good to Israel, and God is well pleased with it. May the Almighty Lord bless you forever!" And all the people said, "Amen."
11 All the people plundered the camp for thirty days. They gave Judith the tent of Holofernes and all his silver dinnerware, his beds, his bowls, and all his furniture. She took them and loaded her mules and hitched up her carts and piled the things on them.

12 All the women of Israel gathered to see her, and blessed her, and some of them performed a dance in her honor. She took ivy-wreathed wands in her hands and distributed them to the women who were with her; 13 and she and those who were with her crowned themselves with olive wreaths. She went before all the people in the dance, leading all the women, while all the men of Israel followed, bearing their arms and wearing garlands and singing hymns.

Judith and the people sing a thanksgiving psalm

14 Judith began this thanksgiving before all Israel, and all the people loudly sang this song of praise. [Judith 16] 1 And Judith said,

Begin a song to my God with tambourines,
    sing to my Lord with cymbals.
Raise to him a new psalm;
    exalt him, and call upon his name.

2 For the Lord is a God who crushes wars;
    he sets up his camp among his people;
    he delivered me from the hands of my pursuers.

3 The Assyrian came down from the mountains of the north;
    he came with myriads of his warriors;
    their numbers blocked up the wadis,
    and their cavalry covered the hills.

4 He boasted that he would burn up my territory,
    and kill my young men with the sword,
    and dash my infants to the ground,
    and seize my children as booty,
    and take my virgins as spoil.
5 But the Lord Almighty has foiled them
   by the hand of a woman.
6 For their mighty one did not fall by the hands of the young men,
   nor did the sons of the Titans strike him down,
   nor did tall giants set upon him;
   but Judith daughter of Merari
   with the beauty of her countenance undid him.

7 For she put away her widow's clothing
   to exalt the oppressed in Israel.
   She anointed her face with perfume;
8 she fastened her hair with a tiara
   and put on a linen gown to beguile him.
9 Her sandal ravished his eyes,
   her beauty captivated his mind,
   and the sword severed his neck!
10 The Persians trembled at her boldness,
    the Medes were daunted at her daring.

11 Then my oppressed people shouted;
    my weak people cried out, and the enemy trembled;
    they lifted up their voices, and the enemy were turned back.
12 Sons of slave-girls pierced them through
    and wounded them like the children of fugitives;
    they perished before the army of my Lord.

13 I will sing to my God a new song:
    O Lord, you are great and glorious,
    wonderful in strength, invincible.
14 Let all your creatures serve you,
    for you spoke, and they were made.
    You sent forth your spirit, and it formed them;
    there is none that can resist your voice.
15 For the mountains shall be shaken to their foundations with
    the waters;
    before your glance the rocks shall melt like wax.
    But to those who fear you
    you show mercy.
16 For every sacrifice as a fragrant offering is a small thing,  
and the fat of all whole burnt offerings to you is a very little  
thing; but whoever fears the Lord is great forever.

17 Woe to the nations that rise up against my people!  
The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on them in the day  
of judgment; he will send fire and worms into their flesh;  
they shall weep in pain forever.

The procession arrives in Jerusalem

18 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they worshiped God. As soon as the  
people were purified, they offered their burnt offerings, their freewill  
offerings, and their gifts. 19 Judith also dedicated to God all the  
possessions of Holofernes, which the people had given her; and the  
canopy that she had taken for herself from his bedchamber she gave as  
a votive offering. 20 For three months the people continued feasting in  
Jerusalem before the sanctuary, and Judith remained with them.

Judith's subsequent life

21 After this they all returned home to their own inheritances. Judith  
went to Bethulia, and remained on her estate. For the rest of her life  
she was honored throughout the whole country. 22 Many desired to  
marry her, but she gave herself to no man all the days of her life after  
her husband Manasseh died and was gathered to his people. 23 She  
became more and more famous, and grew old in her husband's house,  
reaching the age of one hundred five. She set her maid free. She died  
in Bethulia, and they buried her in the cave of her husband Manasseh;  
24 and the house of Israel mourned her for seven days. Before she died  
she distributed her property to all those who were next of kin to her  
husband Manasseh, and to her own nearest kindred. 25 No one ever  
again spread terror among the Israelites during the lifetime of Judith,  
or for a long time after her death.
ADDITIONS TO ESTHER

NOTE. The deuterocanonical portions of the Book of Esther are several additional passages found in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Book of Esther, a translation that differs also in other respects from the Hebrew text (the latter is translated in the NRSV Old Testament). The disordered chapter numbers come from the displacement of the additions to the end of the canonical Book of Esther by Jerome in his Latin translation and from the subsequent division of the Bible into chapters by Stephen Langton, who numbered the additions consecutively as though they formed a direct continuation of the Hebrew text. So that the additions may be read in their proper context, the whole of the Greek version is here translated, though certain familiar names are given according to their Hebrew rather than their Greek form; for example, Mordecai and Vashti instead of Mardocheus and Astin. The order followed is that of the Greek text, but the chapter and verse numbers conform to those of the King James or Authorized Version. The additions, conveniently indicated by the letters A-F, are located as follows: A, before 1.1; B, after 3.13; C and D, after 4.17; E, after 8.12; F, after 10.3.


Introduction

The Greek version of Esther is a translation of the canonical Hebrew book of Esther (i.e., the one included in the "Hebrew Scriptures"
portion of this New Revised Standard Version Bible). The translation was made for Greek-speaking Jews in the second and first century BCE.

The translator — very likely the Lysimachus of Jerusalem mentioned in 11.1 — produced a systematic but relatively free translation of the Hebrew. Besides numerous small but often significant omissions and additions, the Greek version includes six extra sections that have no counterparts in the Hebrew. These additional sections are clearly intrusive and secondary, for they contradict the Hebrew at a number of points. While they sometimes make the characters and events more vivid or dramatic, their main purpose is to transform the comparatively subtle and enigmatic Hebrew story of Esther into a more conventional tale of divine intervention and exemplary Jewish piety.

The Additions to the book of Esther comprise 107 verses. Their contents are as follows:

*Addition A:  Mordecai's dream (11.2-12) and his discovery of a plot against the king (12.1-6)
*Addition B: The royal edict dictated by Haman, decreeing the extermination of the Jews (13.1-7)
*Addition C: The prayers of Mordecai (13.8-18) and Esther (14.1-19)
*Addition D: Esther's appearing unsummoned, before the king (15.4-19)
*Addition E: The royal edict dictated by Mordecai, counteracting the edict sent by Haman (16.1-24)
*Addition F: The interpretation of Mordecai's dream (10.4-13) and the colophon (an inscription at the end of a manuscript) to the Greek version (1.11)

Although there is no mention of God in the Hebrew narrative, in the Greek version the terms "Lord" or "God" appear more than fifty times. Most of the these occurrences are in the Additions, but occasionally the Greek translation inserts references to God into verses that correspond to the canonical Hebrew text (see 2.20; 4.8; 6.13).

The additions provided their authors with an opportunity to express their own particular theological views. Additions A and F introduce
apocalyptic motifs to emphasize God's providential care for the people Israel in a universally hostile world. Addition C attests to the efficacy of prayer and expresses Queen Esther's abhorrence at being married to a Gentile, her loathing of all things worldly and courtly, and her strict observance of Jewish dietary laws — none of which is so much as hinted at in the Hebrew. Thanks largely to Addition D, the climax of the Greek version is reached when God miraculously changes to gentleness the king's "fierce anger" at Esther's unannounced entrance. Taken together, the six additions deemphasize the establishment of Purim and express a deep distrust of Gentiles.

Besides giving the story a more explicitly religious character, the additions create new emphases. A and F, which frame the story, graft onto it a new apocalyptic perspective of cosmic struggle between good and evil. The juxtaposition of C's extensive praise of God, with similar terms and phrases applied to Ahasuerus in D, makes explicit the Greek version's intent to contrast the capricious earthly king with God the trustworthy heavenly king. Similarly, the royal decrees in B and E highlight the theme of human commandments versus the law of Moses to which Esther also alludes when she prays in C.

Originally, A, C, D, and F were probably composed in either Hebrew or Aramaic (both Semitic languages) and, if so, were already part of that particular Semitic text used by the Greek translator. The florid phraseology of B and E indicates that they must originally have been composed in Greek, perhaps in Alexandria, a sophisticated Greek-Jewish center.

The additions were not composed at the same time. The latest possible date for B, C, D, and E is 93 CE, when the historian Josephus paraphrased them in his 'Jewish Antiquities.' The colophon's location (11.1) immediately after F suggests that A as well as F were part of the Semitic text at the time that Lysimachus made his Greek translation in the late second or first century BCE.
Mordecai’s prophetic dream of impending danger to the Jews

2 In the second year of the reign of Artaxerxes the Great, on the first day of Nisan, Mordecai son of Jair son of Shimei son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, had a dream. 3 He was a Jew living in the city of Susa, a great man, serving in the court of the king. 4 He was one of the captives whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had brought from Jerusalem with King Jeconiah of Judea. And this was his dream: 5 Noises and confusion, thunders and earthquake, tumult on the earth! 6 Then two great dragons came forward, both ready to fight, and they roared terribly. 7 At their roaring every nation prepared for war, to fight against the righteous nation. 8 It was a day of darkness and gloom, of tribulation and distress, affliction and great tumult on the earth! 9 And the whole righteous nation was troubled; they feared the evils that threatened them, and were ready to perish. 10 Then they cried out to God; and at their outcry, as though from a tiny spring, there came a great river, with abundant water; 11 light came, and the sun rose, and the lowly were exalted and devoured those held in honor.

12 Mordecai saw in this dream what God had determined to do, and after he awoke he had it on his mind, seeking all day to understand it in every detail.

Mordecai saves the king's life

1 Now Mordecai took his rest in the courtyard with Gabatha and Tharra, the two eunuchs of the king who kept watch in the courtyard. 2 He overheard their conversation and inquired into their purposes, and learned that they were preparing to lay hands on King Artaxerxes; and he informed the king concerning them. 3 Then the king examined the two eunuchs, and after they had confessed it, they were led away
to execution. 4 The king made a permanent record of these things, and Mordecai wrote an account of them. 5 And the king ordered Mordecai to serve in the court, and rewarded him for these things. 6 But Haman son of Hammedatha, a Bougean, who was in great honor with the king, determined to injure Mordecai and his people because of the two eunuchs of the king.

END OF ADDITION A

[Esther 1]
Artaxerxes's banquet

1 It was after this that the following things happened in the days of Artaxerxes, the same Artaxerxes who ruled over one hundred twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia. 2 In those days, when King Artaxerxes was enthroned in the city of Susa, 3 in the third year of his reign, he gave a banquet for his Friends and other persons of various nations, the Persians and Median nobles, and the governors of the provinces. 4 After this, when he had displayed to them the riches of his kingdom and the splendor of his bountiful celebration during the course of one hundred eighty days, 5 at the end of the festivity the king gave a drinking party for the people of various nations who lived in the city. This was held for six days in the courtyard of the royal palace, 6 which was adorned with curtains of fine linen and cotton, held by cords of purple linen attached to gold and silver blocks on pillars of marble and other stones. Gold and silver couches were placed on a mosaic floor of emerald, mother-of-pearl, and marble. There were coverings of gauze, embroidered in various colors, with roses arranged around them. 7 The cups were of gold and silver, and a miniature cup was displayed, made of ruby, worth thirty thousand talents. There was abundant sweet wine, such as the king himself drank. 8 The drinking was not according to a fixed rule; but the king wished to have it so, and he commanded his stewards to comply with his pleasure and with that of the guests.

9 Meanwhile, Queen Vashti gave a drinking party for the women in the palace where King Artaxerxes was.
The fall of Vashti and the king's first edict

10 On the seventh day, when the king was in good humor, he told Haman, Bazan, Tharra, Boraze, Zatholtha, Abataza, and Tharaba, the seven eunuchs who served King Artaxerxes, 11 to escort the queen to him in order to proclaim her as queen and to place the diadem on her head, and to have her display her beauty to all the governors and the people of various nations, for she was indeed a beautiful woman. 12 But Queen Vashti refused to obey him and would not come with the eunuchs. This offended the king and he became furious. 13 He said to his Friends, "This is how Vashti has answered me. Give therefore your ruling and judgment on this matter." 14 Arkesaeus, Sarsathaeus, and Malesear, then the governors of the Persians and Medes who were closest to the king — Arkesaeus, Sarsathaeus, and Malesear, who sat beside him in the chief seats — came to him 15 and told him what must be done to Queen Vashti for not obeying the order that the king had sent her by the eunuchs. 16 Then Muchaeus said to the king and the governors, "Queen Vashti has insulted not only the king but also all the king's governors and officials" 17 (for he had reported to them what the queen had said and how she had defied the king). "And just as she defied King Artaxerxes, 18 so now the other ladies who are wives of the Persian and Median governors, on hearing what she has said to the king, will likewise dare to insult their husbands. 19 If therefore it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree, inscribed in accordance with the laws of the Medes and Persians so that it may not be altered, that the queen may no longer come into his presence; but let the king give her royal rank to a woman better than she. 20 Let whatever law the king enacts be proclaimed in his kingdom, and thus all women will give honor to their husbands, rich and poor alike." 21 This speech pleased the king and the governors, and the king did as Muchaeus had recommended. 22 The king sent the decree into all his kingdom, to every province in its own language, so that in every house respect would be shown to every husband.
[Esther 2]

Esther becomes the new queen

1 After these things, the king's anger abated, and he no longer was concerned about Vashti or remembered what he had said and how he had condemned her. 2 Then the king's servants said, "Let beautiful and virtuous girls be sought out for the king. 3 The king shall appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, and they shall select beautiful young virgins to be brought to the harem in Susa, the capital. Let them be entrusted to the king's eunuch who is in charge of the women, and let ointments and whatever else they need be given them. 4 And the woman who pleases the king shall be queen instead of Vashti." This pleased the king, and he did so.

Mordecai and Esther

5 Now there was a Jew in Susa the capital whose name was Mordecai son of Jair son of Shimei son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin; 6 he had been taken captive from Jerusalem among those whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had captured. 7 And he had a foster child, the daughter of his father's brother, Aminadab, and her name was Esther. When her parents died, he brought her up to womanhood as his own. The girl was beautiful in appearance. 8 So, when the decree of the king was proclaimed, and many girls were gathered in Susa the capital in custody of Gai, Esther also was brought to Gai, who had custody of the women. 9 The girl pleased him and won his favor, and he quickly provided her with ointments and her portion of food, as well as seven maids chosen from the palace; he treated her and her maids with special favor in the harem. 10 Now Esther had not disclosed her people or country, for Mordecai had commanded her not to make it known. 11 And every day Mordecai walked in the courtyard of the harem, to see what would happen to Esther.

Esther becomes queen

12 Now the period after which a girl was to go to the king was twelve months. During this time the days of beautification are completed — six months while they are anointing themselves with oil of myrrh, and
six months with spices and ointments for women. 13 Then she goes in to the king; she is handed to the person appointed, and goes with him from the harem to the king's palace. 14 In the evening she enters and in the morning she departs to the second harem, where Gai the king's eunuch is in charge of the women; and she does not go in to the king again unless she is summoned by name.

15 When the time was fulfilled for Esther daughter of Aminadab, the brother of Mordecai's father, to go in to the king, she neglected none of the things that Gai, the eunuch in charge of the women, had commanded. Now Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her. 16 So Esther went in to King Artaxerxes in the twelfth month, which is Adar, in the seventh year of his reign. 17 And the king loved Esther and she found favor beyond all the other virgins, so he put on her the queen's diadem. 18 Then the king gave a banquet lasting seven days for all his Friends and the officers to celebrate his marriage to Esther; and he granted a remission of taxes to those who were under his rule.

Mordecai and Esther save the king's life

19 Meanwhile Mordecai was serving in the courtyard. 20 Esther had not disclosed her country — such were the instructions of Mordecai; but she was to fear God and keep his laws, just as she had done when she was with him. So Esther did not change her mode of life.

21 Now the king's eunuchs, who were chief bodyguards, were angry because of Mordecai's advancement, and they plotted to kill King Artaxerxes. 22 The matter became known to Mordecai, and he warned Esther, who in turn revealed the plot to the king. 23 He investigated the two eunuchs and hanged them. Then the king ordered a memorandum to be deposited in the royal library in praise of the goodwill shown by Mordecai.

Haman plots to annihilate the Jews

1 After these events King Artaxerxes promoted Haman son of Hammmedatha, a Bougean, advancing him and granting him precedence
over all the king's Friends. 2 So all who were at court used to do obeisance to Haman, for so the king had commanded to be done. Mordecai, however, did not do obeisance. 3 Then the king's courtiers said to Mordecai, "Mordecai, why do you disobey the king's command?" 4 Day after day they spoke to him, but he would not listen to them. Then they informed Haman that Mordecai was resisting the king's command. Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew. 5 So when Haman learned that Mordecai was not doing obeisance to him, he became furiously angry, 6 and plotted to destroy all the Jews under Artaxerxes' rule.

7 In the twelfth year of King Artaxerxes Haman came to a decision by casting lots, taking the days and the months one by one, to fix on one day to destroy the whole race of Mordecai. The lot fell on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar.

8 Then Haman said to King Artaxerxes, "There is a certain nation scattered among the other nations in all your kingdom; their laws are different from those of every other nation, and they do not keep the laws of the king. It is not expedient for the king to tolerate them. 9 If it pleases the king, let it be decreed that they are to be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the king's treasury." 10 So the king took off his signet ring and gave it to Haman to seal the decree that was to be written against the Jews. 11 The king told Haman, "Keep the money, and do whatever you want with that nation."

12 So on the thirteenth day of the first month the king's secretaries were summoned, and in accordance with Haman's instructions they wrote in the name of King Artaxerxes to the magistrates and the governors in every province from India to Ethiopia. There were one hundred twenty-seven provinces in all, and the governors were addressed each in his own language. 13 Instructions were sent by couriers throughout all the empire of Artaxerxes to destroy the Jewish people on a given day of the twelfth month, which is Adar, and to plunder their goods.
ADDITION B

[Esther 13]
The text of the king's letter authorizing the slaughter of the Jews

1 This is a copy of the letter: "The Great King, Artaxerxes, writes the following to the governors of the hundred twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia and to the officials under them:

2 "Having become ruler of many nations and master of the whole world (not elated with presumption of authority but always acting reasonably and with kindness), I have determined to settle the lives of my subjects in lasting tranquility and, in order to make my kingdom peaceable and open to travel throughout all its extent, to restore the peace desired by all people.

3 "When I asked my counselors how this might be accomplished, Haman — who excels among us in sound judgment, and is distinguished for his unchanging goodwill and steadfast fidelity, and has attained the second place in the kingdom — 4 pointed out to us that among all the nations in the world there is scattered a certain hostile people, who have laws contrary to those of every nation and continually disregard the ordinances of kings, so that the unifying of the kingdom that we honorably intend cannot be brought about. 5 We understand that this people, and it alone, stands constantly in opposition to every nation, perversely following a strange manner of life and laws, and is ill-disposed to our government, doing all the harm they can so that our kingdom may not attain stability.

6 "Therefore we have decreed that those indicated to you in the letters written by Haman, who is in charge of affairs and is our second father, shall all — wives and children included — be utterly destroyed by the swords of their enemies, without pity or restraint, on the fourteenth day of the twelfth month, Adar, of this present year, 7 so that those who have long been hostile and remain so may in a single day go down in violence to Hades, and leave our government completely secure and untroubled hereafter."
END OF ADDITION B

[Esther 3]
Haman and the kind celebrate the publication of the decree

14 Copies of the document were posted in every province, and all the nations were ordered to be prepared for that day. 15 The matter was expedited also in Susa. And while the king and Haman caroused together, the city of Susa was thrown into confusion.

[Esther 4]
Mordecai persuades Queen Esther to risk her life and save her people

1 When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and sprinkled himself with ashes; then he rushed through the street of the city, shouting loudly: "An innocent nation is being destroyed!" 2 He got as far as the king's gate, and there he stopped, because no one was allowed to enter the courtyard clothed in sackcloth and ashes. 3 And in every province where the king's proclamation had been posted there was a loud cry of mourning and lamentation among the Jews, and they put on sackcloth and ashes. 4 When the queen's maids and eunuchs came and told her, she was deeply troubled by what she had heard had happened, and sent some clothes to Mordecai to put on instead of sackcloth; but he would not consent. 5 Then Esther summoned Hachratheus, the eunuch who attended her, and ordered him to get accurate information for her from Mordecai.

7 So Mordecai told him what had happened and how Haman had promised to pay ten thousand talents into the royal treasury to bring about the destruction of the Jews. 8 He also gave him a copy of what had been posted in Susa for their destruction, to show to Esther; and he told him to charge her to go in to the king and plead for his favor in behalf of the people. "Remember," he said, "the days when you were an ordinary person, being brought up under my care — for Haman, who stands next to the king, has spoken against us and demands our death. Call upon the Lord; then speak to the king in our behalf, and save us from death."
9 Hachratheus went in and told Esther all these things. 10 And she said to him, "Go to Mordecai and say, 11 'All nations of the empire know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is no escape for that person. Only the one to whom the king stretches out the golden scepter is safe — and it is now thirty days since I was called to go to the king.'"

12 When Hachratheus delivered her entire message to Mordecai, 13 Mordecai told him to go back and say to her, "Esther, do not say to yourself that you alone among all the Jews will escape alive. 14 For if you keep quiet at such a time as this, help and protection will come to the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Yet, who knows whether it was not for such a time as this that you were made queen?" 15 Then Esther gave the messenger this answer to take back to Mordecai: 16 "Go and gather all the Jews who are in Susa and fast on my behalf; for three days and nights do not eat or drink, and my maids and I will also go without food. After that I will go to the king, contrary to the law, even if I must die." 17 So Mordecai went away and did what Esther had told him to do.

ADDITION C
[Esther 13]
The prayers of Mordecai and Esther

8 Then Mordecai prayed to the Lord, calling to remembrance all the works of the Lord.

9 He said, "O Lord, Lord, you rule as King over all things, for the universe is in your power and there is no one who can oppose you when it is your will to save Israel, 10 for you have made heaven and earth and every wonderful thing under heaven. 11 You are Lord of all, and there is no one who can resist you, the Lord. 12 You know all things; you know, O Lord, that it was not in insolence or pride or for any love of glory that I did this, and refused to bow down to this proud Haman; 13 for I would have been willing to kiss the soles of his feet to save Israel! 14 But I did this so that I might not set human glory above the glory of God, and I will not bow down to anyone but you, who are my Lord; and I will not do these things in pride. 15 And now, O Lord
God and King, God of Abraham, spare your people; for the eyes of our foes are upon us to annihilate us, and they desire to destroy the inheritance that has been yours from the beginning. 16 Do not neglect your portion, which you redeemed for yourself out of the land of Egypt. 17 Hear my prayer, and have mercy upon your inheritance; turn our mourning into feasting that we may live and sing praise to your name, O Lord; do not destroy the lips of those who praise you.”

18 And all Israel cried out mightily, for their death was before their eyes.

[Esther 14]
Esther humbly petitions God

1 Then Queen Esther, seized with deadly anxiety, fled to the Lord. 2 She took off her splendid apparel and put on the garments of distress and mourning, and instead of costly perfumes she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she utterly humbled her body; every part that she loved to adorn she covered with her tangled hair. 3 She prayed to the Lord God of Israel, and said: “O my Lord, you only are our king; help me, who am alone and have no helper but you, 4 for my danger is in my hand. 5 Ever since I was born I have heard in the tribe of my family that you, O Lord, took Israel out of all the nations, and our ancestors from among all their forebears, for an everlasting inheritance, and that you did for them all that you promised. 6 And now we have sinned before you, and you have handed us over to our enemies 7 because we glorified their gods. You are righteous, O Lord! 8 And now they are not satisfied that we are in bitter slavery, but they have covenanted with their idols 9 to abolish what your mouth has ordained, and to destroy your inheritance, to stop the mouths of those who praise you and to quench your altar and the glory of your house, 10 to open the mouths of the nations for the praise of vain idols, and to magnify forever a mortal king.

11 "O Lord, do not surrender your scepter to what has no being; and do not let them laugh at our downfall; but turn their plan against them, and make an example of him who began this against us. 12 Remember, O Lord; make yourself known in this time of our affliction, and give me
courage, O King of the gods and Master of all dominion! 13 Put eloquent speech in my mouth before the lion, and turn his heart to hate the man who is fighting against us, so that there may be an end of him and those who agree with him. 14 But save us by your hand, and help me, who am alone and have no helper but you, O Lord. 15 You have knowledge of all things, and you know that I hate the splendor of the wicked and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of any alien. 16 You know my necessity — that I abhor the sign of my proud position, which is upon my head on days when I appear in public. I abhor it like a filthy rag, and I do not wear it on the days when I am at leisure. 17 And your servant has not eaten at Haman's table, and I have not honored the king's feast or drunk the wine of libations. 18 Your servant has had no joy since the day that I was brought here until now, except in you, O Lord God of Abraham. 19 O God, whose might is over all, hear the voice of the despairing, and save us from the hands of evildoers. And save me from my fear!"

END OF ADDITION C

ADDITION D

[Esther 15]
Esther approaches the king

1 On the third day, when she ended her prayer, she took off the garments in which she had worshiped, and arrayed herself in splendid attire. 2 Then, majestically adorned, after invoking the aid of the all-seeing God and Savior, she took two maids with her; 3 on one she leaned gently for support, 4 while the other followed, carrying her train. 5 She was radiant with perfect beauty, and she looked happy, as if beloved, but her heart was frozen with fear. 6 When she had gone through all the doors, she stood before the king. He was seated on his royal throne, clothed in the full array of his majesty, all covered with gold and precious stones. He was most terrifying.

7 Lifting his face, flushed with splendor, he looked at her in fierce anger. The queen faltered, and turned pale and faint, and collapsed on the head of the maid who went in front of her. 8 Then God changed
the spirit of the king to gentleness, and in alarm he sprang from his throne and took her in his arms until she came to herself. He comforted her with soothing words, and said to her, 9 "What is it, Esther? I am your husband. Take courage; 10 You shall not die, for our law applies only to our subjects. Come near."

11 Then he raised the golden scepter and touched her neck with it; 12 he embraced her, and said, "Speak to me." 13 She said to him, "I saw you, my lord, like an angel of God, and my heart was shaken with fear at your glory. 14 For you are wonderful, my lord, and your countenance is full of grace." 15 And while she was speaking, she fainted and fell. 16 Then the king was agitated, and all his servants tried to comfort her.

END OF ADDITION D

[Esther 5]
Esther invites the king and Haman to dinner

3 The king said to her, "What do you wish, Esther? What is your request? It shall be given you, even to half of my kingdom." 4 And Esther said, "Today is a special day for me. If it pleases the king, let him and Haman come to the dinner that I shall prepare today." 5 Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, so that we may do as Esther desires." So they both came to the dinner that Esther had spoken about. 6 While they were drinking wine, the king said to Esther, "What is it, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you." 7 She said, "My petition and request is: 8 if I have found favor in the sight of the king, let the king and Haman come to the dinner that I shall prepare them, and tomorrow I will do as I have done today."

Haman's happiness is spoiled

9 So Haman went out from the king joyful and glad of heart. But when he saw Mordecai the Jew in the courtyard, he was filled with anger. 10 Nevertheless, he went home and summoned his friends and his wife Zosara. 11 And he told them about his riches and the honor that the king had bestowed on him, and how he had advanced him to be the first in the kingdom. 12 And Haman said, "The queen did not invite
anyone to the dinner with the king except me; and I am invited again tomorrow. 13 But these things give me no pleasure as long as I see Mordecai the Jew in the courtyard." 14 His wife Zosara and his friends said to him, "Let a gallows be made, fifty cubits high, and in the morning tell the king to have Mordecai hanged on it. Then, go merrily with the king to the dinner." This advice pleased Haman, and so the gallows was prepared.

[Esther 6]
Mordecai's triumph

1 That night the Lord took sleep from the king, so he gave orders to his secretary to bring the book of daily records, and to read to him. 2 He found the words written about Mordecai, how he had told the king about the two royal eunuchs who were on guard and sought to lay hands on King Artaxerxes. 3 The king said, "What honor or dignity did we bestow on Mordecai?" The king's servants said, "You have not done anything for him." 4 While the king was inquiring about the goodwill shown by Mordecai, Haman was in the courtyard. The king asked, "Who is in the courtyard?" Now Haman had come to speak to the king about hanging Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared. 5 The servants of the king answered, "Haman is standing in the courtyard." And the king said, "Summon him." 6 Then the king said to Haman, "What shall I do for the person whom I wish to honor?" And Haman said to himself, "Whom would the king wish to honor more than me?" 7 So he said to the king, "For a person whom the king wishes to honor, 8 let the king's servants bring out the fine linen robe that the king has worn, and the horse on which the king rides, 9 and let both be given to one of the king's honored Friends, and let him robe the person whom the king loves and mount him on the horse, and let it be proclaimed through the open square of the city, saying, 'Thus shall it be done to everyone whom the king honors.'" 10 Then the king said to Haman, "You have made an excellent suggestion! Do just as you have said for Mordecai the Jew, who is on duty in the courtyard. And let nothing be omitted from what you have proposed." 11 So Haman got the robe and the horse; he put the robe on Mordecai and made him ride through the open square of the city, proclaiming, "Thus shall it be done to everyone whom the king wishes to honor." 12 Then
Mordecai returned to the courtyard, and Haman hurried back to his house, mourning and with his head covered. 13 Haman told his wife Zosara and his friends what had befallen him. His friends and his wife said to him, "If Mordecai is of the Jewish people, and you have begun to be humiliated before him, you will surely fall. You will not be able to defend yourself, because the living God is with him."

**Esther's second banquet and Haman's fall**

14 While they were still talking, the eunuchs arrived and hurriedly brought Haman to the banquet that Esther had prepared. [Esther 7] 1 So the king and Haman went in to drink with the queen. 2 And the second day, as they were drinking wine, the king said, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your petition and what is your request? It shall be granted to you, even to half of my kingdom." 3 She answered and said, "If I have found favor with the king, let my life be granted me at my petition, and my people at my request. 4 For we have been sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, plundered, and made slaves — we and our children — male and female slaves. This has come to my knowledge. Our antagonist brings shame on the king's court." 5 Then the king said, "Who is the person that would dare to do this thing?" 6 Esther said, "Our enemy is this evil man Haman!" At this, Haman was terrified in the presence of the king and queen.

7 The king rose from the banquet and went into the garden, and Haman began to beg for his life from the queen, for he saw that he was in serious trouble. 8 When the king returned from the garden, Haman had thrown himself on the couch, pleading with the queen. The king said, "Will he dare even assault my wife in my own house?" Haman, when he heard, turned away his face. 9 Then Bugathan, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Look, Haman has even prepared a gallows for Mordecai, who gave information of concern to the king; it is standing at Haman's house, a gallows fifty cubits high." So the king said, "Let Haman be hanged on that." 10 So Haman was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. With that the anger of the king abated.
The king shows favor to Esther, Mordecai, and the Jews

1 On that very day King Artaxerxes granted to Esther all the property of the persecutor Haman. Mordecai was summoned by the king, for Esther had told the king that he was related to her. 2 The king took the ring that had been taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther set Mordecai over everything that had been Haman's.

3 Then she spoke once again to the king and, falling at his feet, she asked him to avert all the evil that Haman had planned against the Jews. 4 The king extended his golden scepter to Esther, and she rose and stood before the king. 5 Esther said, "If it pleases you, and if I have found favor, let an order be sent rescinding the letters that Haman wrote and sent to destroy the Jews in your kingdom. 6 How can I look on the ruin of my people? How can I be safe if my ancestral nation is destroyed?"

7 The king said to Esther, "Now that I have granted all of Haman's property to you and have hanged him on a tree because he acted against the Jews, what else do you request? 8 Write in my name what you think best and seal it with my ring; for whatever is written at the king's command and sealed with my ring cannot be contravened."

9 The secretaries were summoned on the twenty-third day of the first month, that is, Nisan, in the same year; and all that he commanded with respect to the Jews was given in writing to the administrators and governors of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred twenty-seven provinces, to each province in its own language. 10 The edict was written with the king's authority and sealed with his ring, and sent out by couriers. 11 He ordered the Jews in every city to observe their own laws, to defend themselves, and to act as they wished against their opponents and enemies 12 on a certain day, the thirteenth of the twelfth month, which is Adar, throughout all the kingdom of Artaxerxes.
ADDITION E

[Esther 16]
The king's second letter denounces Haman, praises Mordecai and Esther, and directs his subjects to help the Jews

1 The following is a copy of this letter:

"The Great King, Artaxerxes, to the governors of the provinces from India to Ethiopia, one hundred twenty-seven provinces, and to those who are loyal to our government, greetings.

2 "Many people, the more they are honored with the most generous kindness of their benefactors, the more proud do they become, 3 and not only seek to injure our subjects, but in their inability to stand prosperity, they even undertake to scheme against their own benefactors. 4 They not only take awaythankfulness from others, but, carried away by the boasts of those who know nothing of goodness, they even assume that they will escape the evil-hating justice of God, who always sees everything. 5 And often many of those who are set in places of authority have been made in part responsible for the shedding of innocent blood, and have been involved in irremediable calamities, by the persuasion of friends who have been entrusted with the administration of public affairs, 6 when these persons by the false trickery of their evil natures beguile the sincere goodwill of their sovereigns.

7 "What has been wickedly accomplished through the pestilent behavior of those who exercise authority unworthily can be seen, not so much from the more ancient records that we hand on, as from investigation of matters close at hand. 8 In the future we will take care to render our kingdom quiet and peaceable for all, 9 by changing our methods and always judging what comes before our eyes with more equitable consideration. 10 For Haman son of Hammedatha, a Macedonian (really an alien to the Persian blood, and quite devoid of our kindliness), having become our guest, 11 enjoyed so fully the goodwill that we have for every nation that he was called our father and was continually bowed down to by all as the person second to the
royal throne. 12 But, unable to restrain his arrogance, he undertook to deprive us of our kingdom and our life, 13 and with intricate craft and deceit asked for the destruction of Mordecai, our savior and perpetual benefactor, and of Esther, the blameless partner of our kingdom, together with their whole nation. 14 He thought that by these methods he would catch us undefended and would transfer the kingdom of the Persians to the Macedonians.

15 "But we find that the Jews, who were consigned to annihilation by this thrice-accursed man, are not evildoers, but are governed by most righteous laws 16 and are children of the living God, most high, most mighty, who has directed the kingdom both for us and for our ancestors in the most excellent order.

17 "You will therefore do well not to put in execution the letters sent by Haman son of Hammedatha, 18 since he, the one who did these things, has been hanged at the gate of Susa with all his household — for God, who rules over all things, has speedily inflicted on him the punishment that he deserved.

19 "Therefore post a copy of this letter publicly in every place, and permit the Jews to live under their own laws. 20 And give them reinforcements, so that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, Adar, on that very day, they may defend themselves against those who attack them at the time of oppression. 21 For God, who rules over all things, has made this day to be a joy for his chosen people instead of a day of destruction for them.

22 "Therefore you shall observe this with all good cheer as a notable day among your commemorative festivals, 23 so that both now and hereafter it may represent deliverance for you and the loyal Persians, but that it may be a reminder of destruction for those who plot against us.

24 "Every city and country, without exception, that does not act accordingly shall be destroyed in wrath with spear and fire. It shall be made not only impassable for human beings, but also most hateful to wild animals and birds for all time.
END OF ADDITION E

[Esther 8]
Dispatch and posting of the king's decree

13 "Let copies of the decree be posted conspicuously in all the kingdom, and let all the Jews be ready on that day to fight against their enemies."

14 So the messengers on horseback set out with all speed to perform what the king had commanded; and the decree was published also in Susa. 15 Mordecai went out dressed in the royal robe and wearing a gold crown and a turban of purple linen. The people in Susa rejoiced on seeing him. 16 And the Jews had light and gladness 17 in every city and province wherever the decree was published; wherever the proclamation was made, the Jews had joy and gladness, a banquet and a holiday. And many of the Gentiles were circumcised and became Jews out of fear of the Jews.

[Esther 9]
The Jews triumph over their enemies

1 Now on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is Adar, the decree written by the king arrived. 2 On that same day the enemies of the Jews perished; no one resisted, because they feared them. 3 The chief provincial governors, the princes, and the royal secretaries were paying honor to the Jews, because fear of Mordecai weighed upon them. 4 The king's decree required that Mordecai's name be held in honor throughout the kingdom. 6 Now in the city of Susa the Jews killed five hundred people, 7 including Pharsannestain, Delphon, Phasga, 8 Pharadatha, Barea, Sarbacha, 9 Marmasima, Aruphaeus, Arsaeus, Zabutheus, 10 the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the Bougean, the enemy of the Jews — and they indulged themselves in plunder.

11 That very day the number of those killed in Susa was reported to the king. 12 The king said to Esther, "In Susa, the capital, the Jews have destroyed five hundred people. What do you suppose they have done
in the surrounding countryside? Whatever more you ask will be done for you." 13 And Esther said to the king, "Let the Jews be allowed to do the same tomorrow. Also, hang up the bodies of Haman's ten sons." 14 So he permitted this to be done, and handed over to the Jews of the city the bodies of Haman's sons to hang up. 15 The Jews who were in Susa gathered on the fourteenth and killed three hundred people, but took no plunder.

16 Now the other Jews in the kingdom gathered to defend themselves, and got relief from their enemies. They destroyed fifteen thousand of them, but did not engage in plunder. 17 On the fourteenth day they rested and made that same day a day of rest, celebrating it with joy and gladness. 18 The Jews who were in Susa, the capital, came together also on the fourteenth, but did not rest. They celebrated the fifteenth with joy and gladness. 19 On this account then the Jews who are scattered around the country outside Susa keep the fourteenth of Adar as a joyful holiday, and send presents of food to one another, while those who live in the large cities keep the fifteenth day of Adar as their joyful holiday, also sending presents to one another.

The inauguration of the feast of Purim

20 Mordecai recorded these things in a book, and sent it to the Jews in the kingdom of Artaxerxes both near and far, 21 telling them that they should keep the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar, 22 for on these days the Jews got relief from their enemies. The whole month (namely, Adar), in which their condition had been changed from sorrow into gladness and from a time of distress to a holiday, was to be celebrated as a time for feasting and gladness and for sending presents of food to their friends and to the poor.

23 So the Jews accepted what Mordecai had written to them 24 — how Haman son of Hammedatha, the Macedonian, fought against them, how he made a decree and cast lots to destroy them, 25 and how he went in to the king, telling him to hang Mordecai; but the wicked plot he had devised against the Jews came back upon himself, and he and his sons were hanged. 26 Therefore these days were called "Purim," because of the lots (for in their language this is the word that means
And so, because of what was written in this letter, and because of what they had experienced in this affair and what had befallen them, Mordecai established this festival, 27 and the Jews took upon themselves, upon their descendants, and upon all who would join them, to observe it without fail. These days of Purim should be a memorial and kept from generation to generation, in every city, family, and country. 28 These days of Purim were to be observed for all time, and the commemoration of them was never to cease among their descendants.

29 Then Queen Esther daughter of Aminadab along with Mordecai the Jew wrote down what they had done, and gave full authority to the letter about Purim. 30 Letters were sent to all the Jews, to the one hundred twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, in words of peace and truth. 31 And Mordecai and Queen Esther established this decision on their own responsibility, pledging their own well-being to the plan. 32 Esther established it by a decree forever, and it was written for a memorial.

[Esther 10]
The greatness of Ahasuerus and Mordecai

1 The king levied a tax upon his kingdom both by land and sea. 2 And as for his power and bravery, and the wealth and glory of his kingdom, they were recorded in the annals of the kings of the Persians and the Medes. 3 Mordecai acted with authority on behalf of King Artaxerxes and was great in the kingdom, as well as honored by the Jews. His way of life was such as to make him beloved to his whole nation.

ADDITION F
Epilogue: Mordecai’s dream explained

4 And Mordecai said, "These things have come from God; 5 for I remember the dream that I had concerning these matters, and none of them has failed to be fulfilled. 6 There was the little spring that became a river, and there was light and sun and abundant water — the river is Esther, whom the king married and made queen. 7 The two dragons are Haman and myself. 8 The nations are those that gathered
to destroy the name of the Jews. 9 And my nation, this is Israel, who cried out to God and was saved. The Lord has saved his people; the Lord has rescued us from all these evils; God has done great signs and wonders, wonders that have never happened among the nations. 10 For this purpose he made two lots, one for the people of God and one for all the nations, 11 and these two lots came to the hour and moment and day of decision before God and among all the nations. 12 And God remembered his people and vindicated his inheritance. 13 So they will observe these days in the month of Adar, on the fourteenth and fifteenth of that month, with an assembly and joy and gladness before God, from generation to generation forever among his people Israel."

[Esther 11]
The Colophon to Greek Esther

1 In the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, Dositheus, who said that he was a priest and a Levite, and his son Ptolemy brought to Egypt the preceding Letter about Purim, which they said was authentic and had been translated by Lysimachus son of Ptolemy, one of the residents of Jerusalem.

END OF ADDITION F
THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Introduction

The Wisdom of Solomon was written as a message of encouragement and exhortation for Jews living somewhere in the Diaspora (the Jewish communities outside the land of Israel) during the Greco-Roman era. Immersed in a cosmopolitan, pagan culture, one that generally viewed Judaism with suspicion if not contempt, many Jews felt hard-pressed to remain loyal to the basic principles and practices of their faith. This book simultaneously affirms the basis of that faith and critiques those who oppose it, in the interests of promoting adherence to Jewish traditions in changing, difficult circumstances.

Although the author claims to be King Solomon (with parts of ch 9 based on his prayer for wisdom in 1 Kings 3.6-9), this ascription has been recognized as a literary fiction since ancient times. Instead, the author is an anonymous Hellenistic Jew writing sometime in the late first century BCE or early first century CE. The book's bitter polemic against Egyptian religion (see, for instance, ch 12) suggests Alexandria as a location, and anti-Jewish uprisings in that city may provide part of the background for the author's reflections.

Composed in Greek, this book is among the most Hellenized works of the Apocrypha; that is, it reflects extensive interaction with Greek literary and philosophical conventions (see, for example, the use of the standard list of cardinal virtues in 8.7). The author's intention, however, is not to promote the achievements of Greek culture, but to appropriate them, so as to prove the excellence of Judaism in categories relevant to his readers' multicultural environment. As for its literary genre, many modern critics describe the Wisdom of Solomon as a form of didactic exhortation that demonstrates the superiority of a particular way of life or school of philosophy (in this case, Judaism) over its competitors and detractors. (This is technically called
"protreptic discourse.") So, for example, while the author can describe wisdom as an emanation of divine power that pervades the entire world, he contends that it comes to most perfect expression in God's revelation to Israel, and depicts it in terms familiar from the personified Wisdom (Greek, "Sophia") of biblical texts like Proverbs 8, Job 28, Sirach 24, and Baruch 3-4. Above all, the author is concerned to portray wisdom as the guiding force of divine providence, saving righteous Israelites and punishing their wicked adversaries. In conjunction with this aim, the book also asserts the significance of Jewish faith in terms of the ultimate benefits it confers. Thus persecutors, sinners, and idolaters face divine retribution in the afterlife, while the faithful will "live forever" (5.15). This emphasis on immortality represents one of the book's distinctive features, as well as something of a new development in Jewish thought (see 3.4n).

The book consists of three major sections. The first, chs 1-6, contrasts the lives of the just and the wicked, dramatizing the eschatological destinies of the two groups. The sections begins and ends with exhortation to seek wisdom and righteousness (1.1-15; 6.1-25). The next section, chs 7-10, celebrates the figure of divine Sophia. The author's persona as Solomon emerges most clearly here, as the king describes wisdom and his pursuit of her. The third section, chs 11-19, adopts the approach of historical comparison, presenting an elaborate system of contrasts based largely on Exodus 7-14. A series of digressions in 11.17-15.19 explains why God's judgment manifested itself differently in dealing with the Egyptians and the Israelites. This adaptation of the Exodus story is meant to complement the arguments of the first two sections, providing biblical examples of the righteous and the unrighteous, and demonstrating how the power of divine wisdom operates in human history.

This book is included among the deuterocanonical books of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, but is considered one of the Apocrypha by the Protestant churches.
A discourse contrasting the righteous and the wicked; Prologue

1 Love righteousness, you rulers of the earth,
   think of the Lord in goodness
   and seek him with sincerity of heart;
2 because he is found by those who do not put him to the test,
   and manifests himself to those who do not distrust him.
3 For perverse thoughts separate people from God,
   and when his power is tested, it exposes the foolish;
4 because wisdom will not enter a deceitful soul,
   or dwell in a body enslaved to sin.
5 For a holy and disciplined spirit will flee from deceit,
   and will leave foolish thoughts behind,
   and will be ashamed at the approach of unrighteousness.

6 For wisdom is a kindly spirit,
   but will not free blasphemers from the guilt of their words;
   because God is witness of their inmost feelings,
   and a true observer of their hearts, and a hearer of their tongues.
7 Because the spirit of the Lord has filled the world,
   and that which holds all things together knows what is said,
8 therefore those who utter unrighteous things will not escape notice,
   and justice, when it punishes, will not pass them by.
9 For inquiry will be made into the counsels of the ungodly,
   and a report of their words will come to the Lord,
   to convict them of their lawless deeds;
10 because a jealous ear hears all things,
   and the sound of grumbling does not go unheard.
11 Beware then of useless grumbling,
   and keep your tongue from slander;
   because no secret word is without result,
   and a lying mouth destroys the soul.

12 Do not invite death by the error of your life,
   or bring on destruction by the works of your hands;
13 because God did not make death,
   and he does not delight in the death of the living.
14 For he created all things so that they might exist; 
the generative forces of the world are wholesome, 
and there is no destructive poison in them, 
and the dominion of Hades is not on earth.
15 For righteousness is immortal.

The deluded reasoning of the ungodly

16 But the ungodly by their words and deeds summoned death; 
considering him a friend, they pined away 
and made a covenant with him, 
because they are fit to belong to his company.

[Wisdom of Solomon 2]

1 For they reasoned unsoundly, saying to themselves, 
"Short and sorrowful is our life, 
and there is no remedy when a life comes to its end, 
and no one has been known to return from Hades.
2 For we were born by mere chance, 
and hereafter we shall be as though we had never been, 
for the breath in our nostrils is smoke, 
and reason is a spark kindled by the beating of our hearts;
3 when it is extinguished, the body will turn to ashes, 
and the spirit will dissolve like empty air.
4 Our name will be forgotten in time, 
and no one will remember our works; 
our life will pass away like the traces of a cloud, 
and be scattered like mist 
that is chased by the rays of the sun 
and overcome by its heat.
5 For our allotted time is the passing of a shadow, 
and there is no return from our death, 
because it is sealed up and no one turns back.

6 "Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that exist, 
and make use of the creation to the full as in youth.
7 Let us take our fill of costly wine and perfumes, and let no flower of spring pass us by.
8 Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they wither.
9 Let none of us fail to share in our revelry; everywhere let us leave signs of enjoyment, because this is our portion, and this our lot.
10 Let us oppress the righteous poor man; let us not spare the widow or regard the gray hairs of the aged.
11 But let our might be our law of right, for what is weak proves itself to be useless."

12 "Let us lie in wait for the righteous man, because he is inconvenient to us and opposes our actions; he reproaches us for sins against the law, and accuses us of sins against our training.
13 He professes to have knowledge of God, and calls himself a child of the Lord.
14 He became to us a reproof of our thoughts; the very sight of him is a burden to us, because his manner of life is unlike that of others, and his ways are strange.
15 We are considered by him as something base, and he avoids our ways as unclean; he calls the last end of the righteous happy, and boasts that God is his father.
16 Let us see if his words are true, and let us test what will happen at the end of his life;
17 for if the righteous man is God's child, he will help him, and will deliver him from the hand of his adversaries.
18 Let us test him with insult and torture, so that we may find out how gentle he is, and make trial of his forbearance.
19 Let us condemn him to a shameful death, for, according to what he says, he will be protected."

21 Thus they reasoned, but they were led astray, for their wickedness blinded them,
22 and they did not know the secret purposes of God, 
nor hoped for the wages of holiness, 
nor discerned the prize for blameless souls; 
23 for God created us for incorruption, 
and made us in the image of his own eternity, 
24 but through the devil's envy death entered the world, 
and those who belong to his company experience it.

[Wisdom of Solomon 3]
The reward of the righteous

1 But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, 
and no torment will ever touch them. 
2 In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, 
and their departure was thought to be a disaster, 
3 and their going from us to be their destruction; 
but they are at peace. 
4 For though in the sight of others they were punished, 
their hope is full of immortality. 
5 Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, 
because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; 
6 like gold in the furnace he tried them, 
and like a sacrificial burnt offering he accepted them. 
7 In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, 
and will run like sparks through the stubble. 
8 They will govern nations and rule over peoples, 
and the Lord will reign over them forever. 
9 Those who trust in him will understand truth, 
and the faithful will abide with him in love, 
because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, 
and he watches over his elect.

Rewards and punishments

10 But the ungodly will be punished as their reasoning deserves, 
those who disregarded the righteous 
and rebelled against the Lord;
11 for those who despise wisdom and instruction are miserable.  
Their hope is vain, their labors are unprofitable,  
and their works are useless.

12 Their wives are foolish, and their children evil;  
13 their offspring are accursed.  
For blessed is the barren woman who is undefiled,  
who has not entered into a sinful union;  
she will have fruit when God examines souls.

14 Blessed also is the eunuch whose hands have done no lawless deed,  
and who has not devised wicked things against the Lord;  
for special favor will be shown him for his faithfulness,  
and a place of great delight in the temple of the Lord.

15 For the fruit of good labors is renowned,  
and the root of understanding does not fail.

16 But children of adulterers will not come to maturity,  
and the offspring of an unlawful union will perish.

17 Even if they live long they will be held of no account,  
and finally their old age will be without honor.

18 If they die young, they will have no hope  
and no consolation on the day of judgment.

19 For the end of an unrighteous generation is grievous.

[Wisdom of Solomon 4]

1 Better than this is childlessness with virtue,  
for in the memory of virtue is immortality,  
because it is known both by God and by mortals.

2 When it is present, people imitate it,  
and they long for it when it has gone;  
throughout all time it marches, crowned in triumph,  
victor in the contest for prizes that are undefiled.

3 But the prolific brood of the ungodly will be of no use,  
and none of their illegitimate seedlings will strike a deep root  
or take a firm hold.

4 For even if they put forth boughs for a while,  
standing insecurely they will be shaken by the wind,  
and by the violence of the winds they will be uprooted.
5 The branches will be broken off before they come to maturity, and their fruit will be useless, not ripe enough to eat, and good for nothing.
6 For children born of unlawful unions are witnesses of evil against their parents when God examines them.

The blessedness of the righteous despite early death

7 But the righteous, though they die early, will be at rest.
8 For old age is not honored for length of time, or measured by number of years;
9 but understanding is gray hair for anyone, and a blameless life is ripe old age.

10 There were some who pleased God and were loved by him, and while living among sinners were taken up.
11 They were caught up so that evil might not change their understanding or guile deceive their souls.
12 For the fascination of wickedness obscures what is good, and roving desire perverts the innocent mind.
13 Being perfected in a short time, they fulfilled long years;
14 for their souls were pleasing to the Lord, therefore he took them quickly from the midst of wickedness.
15 Yet the peoples saw and did not understand, or take such a thing to heart, that God's grace and mercy are with his elect, and that he watches over his holy ones.

16 The righteous who have died will condemn the ungodly who are living, and youth that is quickly perfected will condemn the prolonged old age of the unrighteous.
17 For they will see the end of the wise, and will not understand what the Lord purposed for them, and for what he kept them safe.
18 The unrighteous will see, and will have contempt for them, but the Lord will laugh them to scorn. After this they will become dishonored corpses, and an outrage among the dead forever; 19 because he will dash them speechless to the ground, and shake them from the foundations; they will be left utterly dry and barren, and they will suffer anguish, and the memory of them will perish.

The final judgment

20 They will come with dread when their sins are reckoned up, and their lawless deeds will convict them to their face.

[Wisdom of Solomon 5]

1 Then the righteous will stand with great confidence in the presence of those who have oppressed them and those who make light of their labors. 2 When the unrighteous see them, they will be shaken with dreadful fear, and they will be amazed at the unexpected salvation of the righteous. 3 They will speak to one another in repentance, and in anguish of spirit they will groan, and say, 4 "These are persons whom we once held in derision and made a byword of reproach — fools that we were! We thought that their lives were madness and that their end was without honor. 5 Why have they been numbered among the children of God? And why is their lot among the saints? 6 So it was we who strayed from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness did not shine on us, and the sun did not rise upon us.
7 We took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and destruction, and we journeyed through trackless deserts, but the way of the Lord we have not known.

8 What has our arrogance profited us? And what good has our boasted wealth brought us?

9 "All those things have vanished like a shadow, and like a rumor that passes by;
10 like a ship that sails through the billowy water, and when it has passed no trace can be found, no track of its keel in the waves;
11 or as, when a bird flies through the air, no evidence of its passage is found; the light air, lashed by the beat of its pinions and pierced by the force of its rushing flight, is traversed by the movement of its wings, and afterward no sign of its coming is found there;
12 or as, when an arrow is shot at a target, the air, thus divided, comes together at once, so that no one knows its pathway.
13 So we also, as soon as we were born, ceased to be, and we had no sign of virtue to show, but were consumed in our wickedness."

14 Because the hope of the ungodly is like thistledown carried by the wind, and like a light frost driven away by a storm; it is dispersed like smoke before the wind, and it passes like the remembrance of a guest who stays but a day.

15 But the righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them.
16 Therefore they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord, because with his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm he will shield them.
17 The Lord will take his zeal as his whole armor, 
    and will arm all creation to repel his enemies;  
18 he will put on righteousness as a breastplate, 
    and wear impartial justice as a helmet;  
19 he will take holiness as an invincible shield,  
20 and sharpen stern wrath for a sword,  
    and creation will join with him to fight against his frenzied foes.  
21 Shafts of lightning will fly with true aim,  
    and will leap from the clouds to the target, as from a well-drawn bow,  
22 and hailstones full of wrath will be hurled as from a catapult;  
    the water of the sea will rage against them,  
    and rivers will relentlessly overwhelm them;  
23 a mighty wind will rise against them,  
    and like a tempest it will winnow them away.  
Lawlessness will lay waste the whole earth,  
and evildoing will overturn the thrones of rulers.

[Wisdom of Solomon 6] 
Exhortation to seek wisdom

1 Listen therefore, O kings, and understand;  
    learn, O judges of the ends of the earth.  
2 Give ear, you that rule over multitudes,  
    and boast of many nations.  
3 For your dominion was given you from the Lord,  
    and your sovereignty from the Most High;  
    he will search out your works and inquire into your plans.  
4 Because as servants of his kingdom you did not rule rightly,  
    or keep the law,  
    or walk according to the purpose of God,  
5 he will come upon you terribly and swiftly,  
    because severe judgment falls on those in high places.  
6 For the lowliest may be pardoned in mercy,  
    but the mighty will be mightily tested.
7 For the Lord of all will not stand in awe of anyone, 
or show deference to greatness; 
because he himself made both small and great, 
and he takes thought for all alike.
8 But a strict inquiry is in store for the mighty.
9 To you then, O monarchs, my words are directed, 
so that you may learn wisdom and not transgress.
10 For they will be made holy who observe holy things in holiness, 
and those who have been taught them will find a defense.
11 Therefore set your desire on my words; 
long for them, and you will be instructed.

12 Wisdom is radiant and unfading, 
and she is easily discerned by those who love her, 
and is found by those who seek her.
13 She hastens to make herself known to those who desire her.
14 One who rises early to seek her will have no difficulty, 
for she will be found sitting at the gate.
15 To fix one's thought on her is perfect understanding, 
and one who is vigilant on her account will soon be free 
from care,
16 because she goes about seeking those worthy of her, 
and she graciously appears to them in their paths, 
and meets them in every thought.
17 The beginning of wisdom is the most sincere desire for instruction, 
and concern for instruction is love of her,
18 and love of her is the keeping of her laws, 
and giving heed to her laws is assurance of immortality,
19 and immortality brings one near to God; 
20 so the desire for wisdom leads to a kingdom.

21 Therefore if you delight in thrones and scepters, O monarchs 
over the peoples, honor wisdom, so that you may reign forever.
22 I will tell you what wisdom is and how she came to be,  
and I will hide no secrets from you,  
but I will trace her course from the beginning of creation,  
and make knowledge of her clear,  
and I will not pass by the truth;  

23 nor will I travel in the company of sickly envy,  
for envy does not associate with wisdom.  

24 The multitude of the wise is the salvation of the world,  
and a sensible king is the stability of any people.  
25 Therefore be instructed by my words, and you will profit.  

[Wisdom of Solomon 7]  
King Solomon and the quest for wisdom; Solomon's Speech  

1 I also am mortal, like everyone else,  
a descendant of the first-formed child of earth;  
and in the womb of a mother I was molded into flesh,  
within the period of ten months, compacted with blood,  
from the seed of a man and the pleasure of marriage.  

3 And when I was born, I began to breathe the common air,  
and fell upon the kindred earth;  
my first sound was a cry, as is true of all.  

4 I was nursed with care in swaddling cloths.  

5 For no king has had a different beginning of existence;  
6 there is for all one entrance into life, and one way out.  
7 Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given me;  
I called on God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me.  

8 I preferred her to scepters and thrones,  
and I accounted wealth as nothing in comparison with her.  

9 Neither did I liken to her any priceless gem,  
because all gold is but a little sand in her sight,  
and silver will be accounted as clay before her.  

10 I loved her more than health and beauty,  
and I chose to have her rather than light,  
because her radiance never ceases.  

11 All good things came to me along with her,  
and in her hands uncounted wealth.
12 I rejoiced in them all, because wisdom leads them;  
but I did not know that she was their mother.
13 I learned without guile and I impart without grudging;  
I do not hide her wealth,
14 for it is an unfailing treasure for mortals;  
those who get it obtain friendship with God,  
commended for the gifts that come from instruction.

15 May God grant me to speak with judgment,  
and to have thoughts worthy of what I have received;  
for he is the guide even of wisdom  
and the corrector of the wise.
16 For both we and our words are in his hand,  
as are all understanding and skill in crafts.
17 For it is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists,  
to know the structure of the world and the activity of the  
elements;
18 the beginning and end and middle of times,  
the alternations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons,
19 the cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars,  
20 the natures of animals and the tempers of wild animals,  
the powers of spirits and the thoughts of human beings,  
the varieties of plants and the virtues of roots;
21 I learned both what is secret and what is manifest,  
22 for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me.

The divine essence and activity of wisdom

There is in her a spirit that is intelligent, holy,  
unique, manifold, subtle,  
mobile, clear, unpolluted,  
distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, keen,  
irresistible, 23 beneficent, humane,  
steadfast, sure, free from anxiety,  
all-powerful, overseeing all,  
and penetrating through all spirits  
that are intelligent, pure, and altogether subtle.
24 For wisdom is more mobile than any motion; 
because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all things.
25 For she is a breath of the power of God, 
and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty; 
therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her.
26 For she is a reflection of eternal light, 
a spotless mirror of the working of God, 
and an image of his goodness.
27 Although she is but one, she can do all things, 
and while remaining in herself, she renews all things; 
in every generation she passes into holy souls 
and makes them friends of God, and prophets;
28 for God loves nothing so much as the person who lives with wisdom.
29 She is more beautiful than the sun, 
and excels every constellation of the stars. 
Compared with the light she is found to be superior,
30 for it is succeeded by the night, 
but against wisdom evil does not prevail.

[Wisdom of Solomon 8]

1 She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to the other, 
and she orders all things well.

The many benefits of a relationship with wisdom

2 I loved her and sought her from my youth; 
I desired to take her for my bride, 
and became enamored of her beauty.
3 She glorifies her noble birth by living with God, 
and the Lord of all loves her.
4 For she is an initiate in the knowledge of God, 
and an associate in his works.
5 If riches are a desirable possession in life, 
what is richer than wisdom, the active cause of all things?
6 And if understanding is effective, 
who more than she is fashioner of what exists?
7 And if anyone loves righteousness,  
her labors are virtues;  
for she teaches self-control and prudence,  
justice and courage;  
nothing in life is more profitable for mortals than these.

8 And if anyone longs for wide experience,  
she knows the things of old, and infers the things to come;  
she understands turns of speech and the solutions of riddles;  
she has foreknowledge of signs and wonders  
and of the outcome of seasons and times.

9 Therefore I determined to take her to live with me,  
knowing that she would give me good counsel  
and encouragement in cares and grief.

10 Because of her I shall have glory among the multitudes  
and honor in the presence of the elders, though I am young.

11 I shall be found keen in judgment,  
and in the sight of rulers I shall be admired.

12 When I am silent they will wait for me,  
and when I speak they will give heed;  
if I speak at greater length,  
they will put their hands on their mouths.

13 Because of her I shall have immortality,  
and leave an everlasting remembrance to those who come  
after me.

14 I shall govern peoples,  
and nations will be subject to me;

15 dread monarchs will be afraid of me when they hear of me;  
among the people I shall show myself capable, and courageous  
in war.

16 When I enter my house, I shall find rest with her;  
for companionship with her has no bitterness,  
and life with her has no pain, but gladness and joy.

17 When I considered these things inwardly,  
and pondered in my heart  
that in kinship with wisdom there is immortality,
18 and in friendship with her, pure delight,
    and in the labors of her hands, unfailing wealth,
    and in the experience of her company, understanding,
    and renown in sharing her words,
    I went about seeking how to get her for myself.

19 As a child I was naturally gifted,
    and a good soul fell to my lot;
20 or rather, being good, I entered an undefiled body.

Solomon's prayer for wisdom

21 But I perceived that I would not possess wisdom unless God gave
    her to me — and it was a mark of insight to know whose gift
    she was — so I appealed to the Lord and implored him,
    and with my whole heart I said:

[Wisdom of Solomon 9]

1 "O God of my ancestors and Lord of mercy,
    who have made all things by your word,
2 and by your wisdom have formed humankind
    to have dominion over the creatures you have made,
3 and rule the world in holiness and righteousness,
    and pronounce judgment in uprightness of soul,
4 give me the wisdom that sits by your throne,
    and do not reject me from among your servants.
5 For I am your servant the son of your serving girl,
    a man who is weak and short-lived,
    with little understanding of judgment and laws;
6 for even one who is perfect among human beings
    will be regarded as nothing without the wisdom that
    comes from you.
7 You have chosen me to be king of your people
    and to be judge over your sons and daughters.
8 You have given command to build a temple on your holy mountain,
    and an altar in the city of your habitation,
    a copy of the holy tent that you prepared from the beginning.
9 With you is wisdom, she who knows your works
    and was present when you made the world;
she understands what is pleasing in your sight
    and what is right according to your commandments.
10 Send her forth from the holy heavens,
    and from the throne of your glory send her,
that she may labor at my side,
    and that I may learn what is pleasing to you.
11 For she knows and understands all things,
    and she will guide me wisely in my actions
    and guard me with her glory.
12 Then my works will be acceptable,
    and I shall judge your people justly,
    and shall be worthy of the throne of my father.
13 For who can learn the counsel of God?
    Or who can discern what the Lord wills?
14 For the reasoning of mortals is worthless,
    and our designs are likely to fail;
15 for a perishable body weighs down the soul,
    and this earthy tent burdens the thoughtful mind.
16 We can hardly guess at what is on earth,
    and what is at hand we find with labor;
    but who has traced out what is in the heavens?
17 Who has learned your counsel,
    unless you have given wisdom
    and sent your holy spirit from on high?
18 And thus the paths of those on earth were set right,
    and people were taught what pleases you,
    and were saved by wisdom."

[Wisdom of Solomon 10]
Historical illustrations of wisdom's saving and punitive power

1 Wisdom protected the first-formed father of the world, when
he alone had been created; she delivered him from his
transgression,
2 and gave him strength to rule all things.
3 But when an unrighteous man departed from her in his anger,
   he perished because in rage he killed his brother.
4 When the earth was flooded because of him, wisdom again saved it,
   steering the righteous man by a paltry piece of wood.

5 Wisdom also, when the nations in wicked agreement had been put to
   confusion, recognized the righteous man and preserved him
   blameless before God, and kept him strong in the face of his
   compassion for his child.

6 Wisdom rescued a righteous man when the ungodly were perishing;
   he escaped the fire that descended on the Five Cities.
7 Evidence of their wickedness still remains:
   a continually smoking wasteland,
   plants bearing fruit that does not ripen,
   and a pillar of salt standing as a monument to an
   unbelieving soul.
8 For because they passed wisdom by,
   they not only were hindered from recognizing the good,
   but also left for humankind a reminder of their folly,
   so that their failures could never go unnoticed.

9 Wisdom rescued from troubles those who served her.
10 When a righteous man fled from his brother's wrath,
   she guided him on straight paths;
   she showed him the kingdom of God,
   and gave him knowledge of holy things;
   she prospered him in his labors,
   and increased the fruit of his toil.
11 When his oppressors were covetous,
   she stood by him and made him rich.
12 She protected him from his enemies,
   and kept him safe from those who lay in wait for him;
   in his arduous contest she gave him the victory,
   so that he might learn that godliness is more powerful
   than anything else.
13 When a righteous man was sold, wisdom did not desert him,  
but delivered him from sin.  
She descended with him into the dungeon,  
14 and when he was in prison she did not leave him,  
until she brought him the scepter of a kingdom  
and authority over his masters.  
Those who accused him she showed to be false,  
and she gave him everlasting honor.

15 A holy people and blameless race  
wisdom delivered from a nation of oppressors.  
16 She entered the soul of a servant of the Lord,  
and withstood dread kings with wonders and signs.  
17 She gave to holy people the reward of their labors;  
she guided them along a marvelous way,  
and became a shelter to them by day,  
and a starry flame through the night.  
18 She brought them over the Red Sea,  
and led them through deep waters;  
19 but she drowned their enemies,  
and cast them up from the depth of the sea.  
20 Therefore the righteous plundered the ungodly;  
they sang hymns, O Lord, to your holy name,  
and praised with one accord your defending hand;  
21 for wisdom opened the mouths of those who were mute,  
and made the tongues of infants speak clearly.

[Wisdom of Solomon 11]  
A historical meditation contrasting God's dealings with the Israelites  
and the Egyptians; the first contrast

1 Wisdom prospered their works by the hand of a holy prophet.  
2 They journeyed through an uninhabited wilderness,  
and pitched their tents in untrodden places.  
3 They withstood their enemies and fought off their foes.  
4 When they were thirsty, they called upon you,  
and water was given them out of flinty rock,  
and from hard stone a remedy for their thirst.
5 For through the very things by which their enemies were punished, they themselves received benefit in their need.
6 Instead of the fountain of an ever-flowing river, stirred up and defiled with blood
7 in rebuke for the decree to kill the infants, you gave them abundant water unexpectedly,
8 showing by their thirst at that time how you punished their enemies.
9 For when they were tried, though they were being disciplined in mercy, they learned how the ungodly were tormented when judged in wrath.
10 For you tested them as a parent does in warning, but you examined the ungodly as a stern king does in condemnation.
11 Whether absent or present, they were equally distressed,
12 for a twofold grief possessed them, and a groaning at the memory of what had occurred.
13 For when they heard that through their own punishments the righteous had received benefit, they perceived it was the LORD's doing.
14 For though they had mockingly rejected him who long before had been cast out and exposed, at the end of the events they marveled at him, when they felt thirst in a different way from the righteous.

15 In return for their foolish and wicked thoughts, which led them astray to worship irrational serpents and worthless animals, you sent upon them a multitude of irrational creatures to punish them,
16 so that they might learn that one is punished by the very things by which one sins.

A series of digressions; God exercises power and mercy in judgment

17 For your all-powerful hand, which created the world out of formless matter, did not lack the means to send upon them a multitude of bears, or bold lions,
18 or newly-created unknown beasts full of rage,
or such as breathe out fiery breath,
or belch forth a thick pall of smoke,
or flash terrible sparks from their eyes;
19 not only could the harm they did destroy people,
but the mere sight of them could kill by fright.
20 Even apart from these, people could fall at a single breath
when pursued by justice
and scattered by the breath of your power.
But you have arranged all things by measure and number and weight.

21 For it is always in your power to show great strength,
and who can withstand the might of your arm?
22 Because the whole world before you is like a speck that tips the scales, and like a drop of morning dew that falls on the ground.
23 But you are merciful to all, for you can do all things,
and you overlook people's sins, so that they may repent.
24 For you love all things that exist,
and detest none of the things that you have made,
for you would not have made anything if you had hated it.
25 How would anything have endured if you had not willed it?
Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved?
26 You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord, you who love the living.

[Wisdom of Solomon 12]
Divine righteousness and forbearance

1 For your immortal spirit is in all things.
2 Therefore you correct little by little those who trespass,
   and you remind and warn them of the things through which they sin, so that they may be freed from wickedness and put their trust in you, O Lord.
3 Those who lived long ago in your holy land
4 you hated for their detestable practices,
   their works of sorcery and unholy rites,
5 their merciless slaughter of children,
   and their sacrificial feasting on human flesh and blood.
   These initiates from the midst of a heathen cult,
6 these parents who murder helpless lives,
   you willed to destroy by the hands of our ancestors,
7 so that the land most precious of all to you
   might receive a worthy colony of the servants of God.
8 But even these you spared, since they were but mortals,
   and sent wasps as forerunners of your army
   to destroy them little by little,
9 though you were not unable to give the ungodly into the hands of
   the righteous in battle, or to destroy them at one blow by dread
   wild animals or your stern word.
10 But judging them little by little you gave them an opportunity to
   repent,
   though you were not unaware that their origin was evil
   and their wickedness inborn,
   and that their way of thinking would never change.
11 For they were an accursed race from the beginning,
   and it was not through fear of anyone that you left them
   unpunished for their sins.

12 For who will say, "What have you done?"
   or will resist your judgment?
   Who will accuse you for the destruction of nations that you
   made?
   Or who will come before you to plead as an advocate for the
   unrighteous?
13 For neither is there any god besides you, whose care is for all people,
   to whom you should prove that you have not judged unjustly;
14 nor can any king or monarch confront you about those whom you
   have punished.
15 You are righteous and you rule all things righteously,
   deeming it alien to your power
   to condemn anyone who does not deserve to be punished.
16 For your strength is the source of righteousness, and your sovereignty over all causes you to spare all.
17 For you show your strength when people doubt the completeness of your power, and you rebuke any insolence among those who know it.
18 Although you are sovereign in strength, you judge with mildness, and with great forbearance you govern us; for you have power to act whenever you choose.

19 Through such works you have taught your people that the righteous must be kind, and you have filled your children with good hope, because you give repentance for sins.
20 For if you punished with such great care and indulgence the enemies of your servants and those deserving of death, granting them time and opportunity to give up their wickedness, with what strictness you have judged your children, to whose ancestors you gave oaths and covenants full of good promises!
21 So while chastening us you scourge our enemies ten thousand times more, so that, when we judge, we may meditate upon your goodness, and when we are judged, we may expect mercy.

23 Therefore those who lived unrighteously, in a life of folly, you tormented through their own abominations.
24 For they went far astray on the paths of error, accepting as gods those animals that even their enemies despised; they were deceived like foolish infants.
25 Therefore, as though to children who cannot reason, you sent your judgment to mock them.
26 But those who have not heeded the warning of mild rebukes will experience the deserved judgment of God.
27 For when in their suffering they became incensed at those creatures that they had thought to be gods, being punished by means of them, they saw and recognized as the true God the one whom they had before refused to know. Therefore the utmost condemnation came upon them.
[Wisdom of Solomon 13]
The folly of false worship; critique of nature worship

1 For all people who were ignorant of God were foolish by nature; and they were unable from the good things that are seen to know the one who exists, nor did they recognize the artisan while paying heed to his works;
2 but they supposed that either fire or wind or swift air, or the circle of the stars, or turbulent water, or the luminaries of heaven were the gods that rule the world.
3 If through delight in the beauty of these things people assumed them to be gods, let them know how much better than these is their Lord, for the author of beauty created them.
4 And if people were amazed at their power and working, let them perceive from them how much more powerful is the one who formed them.
5 For from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator.
6 Yet these people are little to be blamed, for perhaps they go astray while seeking God and desiring to find him.
7 For while they live among his works, they keep searching, and they trust in what they see, because the things that are seen are beautiful.
8 Yet again, not even they are to be excused; 9 for if they had the power to know so much that they could investigate the world, how did they fail to find sooner the Lord of these things?

Polemic against idolatry

10 But miserable, with their hopes set on dead things, are those who give the name "gods" to the works of human hands, gold and silver fashioned with skill, and likenesses of animals, or a useless stone, the work of an ancient hand.
11 A skilled woodcutter may saw down a tree easy to handle and skillfully strip off all its bark, and then with pleasing workmanship make a useful vessel that serves life's needs,
12 and burn the cast-off pieces of his work to prepare his food, and eat his fill.
13 But a cast-off piece from among them, useful for nothing, a stick crooked and full of knots, he takes and carves with care in his leisure, and shapes it with skill gained in idleness; he forms it in the likeness of a human being,
14 or makes it like some worthless animal, giving it a coat of red paint and coloring its surface red and covering every blemish in it with paint;
15 then he makes a suitable niche for it, and sets it in the wall, and fastens it there with iron.
16 He takes thought for it, so that it may not fall, because he knows that it cannot help itself, for it is only an image and has need of help.
17 When he prays about possessions and his marriage and children, he is not ashamed to address a lifeless thing.
18 For health he appeals to a thing that is weak; for life he prays to a thing that is dead; for aid he entreats a thing that is utterly inexperienced; for a prosperous journey, a thing that cannot take a step;
19 for money-making and work and success with his hands he asks strength of a thing whose hands have no strength.

[Wisdom of Solomon 14]

1 Again, one preparing to sail and about to voyage over raging waves calls upon a piece of wood more fragile than the ship that carries him.
2 For it was desire for gain that planned that vessel, and wisdom was the artisan who built it;
3 but it is your providence, O Father, that steers its course, because you have given it a path in the sea, and a safe way through the waves,
4 showing that you can save from every danger,
    so that even a person who lacks skill may put to sea.
5 It is your will that works of your wisdom should not be without
    effect; therefore people trust their lives even to the smallest
    piece of wood, and passing through the billows on a raft they
    come safely to land.
6 For even in the beginning, when arrogant giants were perishing,
    the hope of the world took refuge on a raft,
    and guided by your hand left to the world the seed of a new
    generation.
7 For blessed is the wood by which righteousness comes.

8 But the idol made with hands is accursed, and so is the one who
    made it — he for having made it, and the perishable thing
    because it was named a god.
9 For equally hateful to God are the ungodly and their ungodliness;
10 for what was done will be punished together with the one who
    did it.
11 Therefore there will be a visitation also upon the heathen idols,
    because, though part of what God created, they became an
    abomination, snares for human souls and a trap for the feet of
    the foolish.

Idols are the invention of human vanity

12 For the idea of making idols was the beginning of fornication,
    and the invention of them was the corruption of life;
13 for they did not exist from the beginning,
    nor will they last forever.
14 For through human vanity they entered the world,
    and therefore their speedy end has been planned.

15 For a father, consumed with grief at an untimely bereavement,
    made an image of his child, who had been suddenly taken from
    him; he now honored as a god what was once a dead human
    being, and handed on to his dependents secret rites and
    initiations.
16 Then the ungodly custom, grown strong with time, was kept as a law, and at the command of monarchs carved images were worshiped.

17 When people could not honor monarchs in their presence, since they lived at a distance, they imagined their appearance far away, and made a visible image of the king whom they honored, so that by their zeal they might flatter the absent one as though present.

18 Then the ambition of the artisan impelled even those who did not know the king to intensify their worship.

19 For he, perhaps wishing to please his ruler, skillfully forced the likeness to take more beautiful form,

20 and the multitude, attracted by the charm of his work, now regarded as an object of worship the one whom shortly before they had honored as a human being.

21 And this became a hidden trap for humankind, because people, in bondage to misfortune or to royal authority, bestowed on objects of stone or wood the name that ought not to be shared.

The repercussions of idolatry

22 Then it was not enough for them to err about the knowledge of God, but though living in great strife due to ignorance, they call such great evils peace.

23 For whether they kill children in their initiations, or celebrate secret mysteries, or hold frenzied revels with strange customs,

24 they no longer keep either their lives or their marriages pure, but they either treacherously kill one another, or grieve one another by adultery,

25 and all is a raging riot of blood and murder, theft and deceit, corruption, faithlessness, tumult, perjury,

26 confusion over what is good, forgetfulness of favors, defiling of souls, sexual perversion, disorder in marriages, adultery, and debauchery.

27 For the worship of idols not to be named is the beginning and cause and end of every evil.
28 For their worshipers either rave in exultation, 
or prophesy lies, or live unrighteously, or readily commit perjury; 
29 for because they trust in lifeless idols 
they swear wicked oaths and expect to suffer no harm. 
30 But just penalties will overtake them on two counts: 
because they thought wrongly about God in devoting themselves 
to idols, and because in deceit they swore unrighteously through 
contempt for holiness. 
31 For it is not the power of the things by which people swear, 
but the just penalty for those who sin, 
that always pursues the transgression of the unrighteous.

[Wisdom of Solomon 15] 
The benefits of true worship

1 But you, our God, are kind and true, 
   patient, and ruling all things in mercy. 
2 For even if we sin we are yours, knowing your power; 
   but we will not sin, because we know that you acknowledge 
   us as yours. 
3 For to know you is complete righteousness, 
   and to know your power is the root of immortality.
4 For neither has the evil intent of human art misled us, 
   nor the fruitless toil of painters, 
   a figure stained with varied colors, 
5 whose appearance arouses yearning in fools, 
   so that they desire the lifeless form of a dead image. 
6 Lovers of evil things and fit for such objects of hope 
   are those who either make or desire or worship them.
The fabrication of idols

7 A potter kneads the soft earth
   and laboriously molds each vessel for our service,
   fashioning out of the same clay
   both the vessels that serve clean uses
   and those for contrary uses, making all alike;
   but which shall be the use of each of them
   the worker in clay decides.

8 With misspent toil, these workers form a futile god from the same
   clay — these mortals who were made of earth a short time
   before and after a little while go to the earth from which all
   mortals are taken, when the time comes to return the souls that
   were borrowed.

9 But the workers are not concerned that mortals are destined to die
   or that their life is brief,
   but they compete with workers in gold and silver,
   and imitate workers in copper;
   and they count it a glorious thing to mold counterfeit gods.

10 Their heart is ashes, their hope is cheaper than dirt,
    and their lives are of less worth than clay,

11 because they failed to know the one who formed them
    and inspired them with active souls
    and breathed a living spirit into them.

12 But they considered our existence an idle game,
    and life a festival held for profit,
    for they say one must get money however one can, even by
    base means.

13 For these persons, more than all others, know that they sin
    when they make from earthy matter fragile vessels and
    carved images.

14 But most foolish, and more miserable than an infant,
    are all the enemies who oppressed your people.
15 For they thought that all their heathen idols were gods, though these have neither the use of their eyes to see with, nor nostrils with which to draw breath, nor ears with which to hear, nor fingers to feel with, and their feet are of no use for walking.

16 For a human being made them, and one whose spirit is borrowed formed them; for none can form gods that are like themselves.

17 People are mortal, and what they make with lawless hands is dead; for they are better than the objects they worship, since they have life, but the idols never had.

18 Moreover, they worship even the most hateful animals, which are worse than all others when judged by their lack of intelligence;

19 and even as animals they are not so beautiful in appearance that one would desire them, but they have escaped both the praise of God and his blessing.

[Wisdom of Solomon 16]
The second contrast

1 Therefore those people were deservedly punished through such creatures, and were tormented by a multitude of animals.

2 Instead of this punishment you showed kindness to your people, and you prepared quails to eat, a delicacy to satisfy the desire of appetite;

3 in order that those people, when they desired food, might lose the least remnant of appetite because of the odious creatures sent to them, while your people, after suffering want a short time, might partake of delicacies.

4 For it was necessary that upon those oppressors inescapable want should come, while to these others it was merely shown how their enemies were being tormented.
The third contrast

5 For when the terrible rage of wild animals came upon your people and they were being destroyed by the bites of writhing serpents, your wrath did not continue to the end;
6 they were troubled for a little while as a warning, and received a symbol of deliverance to remind them of your law's command.

7 For the one who turned toward it was saved, not by the thing that was beheld, but by you, the Savior of all.
8 And by this also you convinced our enemies that it is you who deliver from every evil.
9 For they were killed by the bites of locusts and flies, and no healing was found for them, because they deserved to be punished by such things.
10 But your children were not conquered even by the fangs of venomous serpents, for your mercy came to their help and healed them.
11 To remind them of your oracles they were bitten, and then were quickly delivered, so that they would not fall into deep forgetfulness and become unresponsive to your kindness.
12 For neither herb nor poultice cured them, but it was your word, O Lord, that heals all people.
13 For you have power over life and death; you lead mortals down to the gates of Hades and back again.
14 A person in wickedness kills another, but cannot bring back the departed spirit, or set free the imprisoned soul.

The fourth contrast

15 To escape from your hand is impossible;
16 for the ungodly, refusing to know you, were flogged by the strength of your arm, pursued by unusual rains and hail and relentless storms, and utterly consumed by fire.
17 For — most incredible of all — in water, which quenches all things, the fire had still greater effect, for the universe defends the righteous.

18 At one time the flame was restrained, so that it might not consume the creatures sent against the ungodly, but that seeing this they might know that they were being pursued by the judgment of God;

19 and at another time even in the midst of water it burned more intensely than fire, to destroy the crops of the unrighteous land.

20 Instead of these things you gave your people food of angels, and without their toil you supplied them from heaven with bread ready to eat, providing every pleasure and suited to every taste.

21 For your sustenance manifested your sweetness toward your children; and the bread, ministering to the desire of the one who took it, was changed to suit everyone's liking.

22 Snow and ice withstood fire without melting, so that they might know that the crops of their enemies were being destroyed by the fire that blazed in the hail and flashed in the showers of rain;

23 whereas the fire, in order that the righteous might be fed, even forgot its native power.

24 For creation, serving you who made it, exerts itself to punish the unrighteous, and in kindness relaxes on behalf of those who trust in you.

25 Therefore at that time also, changed into all forms, it served your all-nourishing bounty, according to the desire of those who had need,

26 so that your children, whom you loved, O Lord, might learn that it is not the production of crops that feeds humankind but that your word sustains those who trust in you.

27 For what was not destroyed by fire was melted when simply warmed by a fleeting ray of the sun,

28 to make it known that one must rise before the sun to give you thanks, and must pray to you at the dawning of the light;

29 for the hope of an ungrateful person will melt like wintry frost, and flow away like waste water.
[Wisdom of Solomon 17]
The fifth contrast

1 Great are your judgments and hard to describe; therefore uninstructed souls have gone astray.
2 For when lawless people supposed that they held the holy nation in their power, they themselves lay as captives of darkness and prisoners of long night, shut in under their roofs, exiles from eternal providence.
3 For thinking that in their secret sins they were unobserved behind a dark curtain of forgetfulness, they were scattered, terribly alarmed, and appalled by specters.
4 For not even the inner chamber that held them protected them from fear, but terrifying sounds rang out around them, and dismal phantoms with gloomy faces appeared.
5 And no power of fire was able to give light, nor did the brilliant flames of the stars avail to illumine that hateful night.
6 Nothing was shining through to them except a dreadful, self-kindled fire, and in terror they deemed the things that they saw to be worse than that unseen appearance.
7 The delusions of their magic art lay humbled, and their boasted wisdom was scornfully rebuked.
8 For those who promised to drive off the fears and disorders of a sick soul were sick themselves with ridiculous fear.
9 For even if nothing disturbing frightened them, yet, scared by the passing of wild animals and the hissing of snakes they perished in trembling fear, refusing to look even at the air, though it nowhere could be avoided.
10 For wickedness is a cowardly thing, condemned by its own testimony; distressed by conscience, it has always exaggerated the difficulties.
12 For fear is nothing but a giving up of the helps that come from reason;
13 and hope, defeated by this inward weakness, prefers ignorance of what causes the torment.
14 But throughout the night, which was really powerless and which came upon them from the recesses of powerless Hades, they all slept the same sleep,
15 and now were driven by monstrous specters, and now were paralyzed by their souls' surrender; for sudden and unexpected fear overwhelmed them.
16 And whoever was there fell down, and thus was kept shut up in a prison not made of iron;
17 for whether they were farmers or shepherds or workers who toiled in the wilderness, they were seized, and endured the inescapable fate; for with one chain of darkness they all were bound.
18 Whether there came a whistling wind, or a melodious sound of birds in wide-spreading branches, or the rhythm of violently rushing water,
19 or the harsh crash of rocks hurled down, or the unseen running of leaping animals, or the sound of the most savage roaring beasts, or an echo thrown back from a hollow of the mountains, it paralyzed them with terror.
20 For the whole world was illumined with brilliant light, and went about its work unhindered,
21 while over those people alone heavy night was spread, an image of the darkness that was destined to receive them; but still heavier than darkness were they to themselves.

[Wisdom of Solomon 18]

1 But for your holy ones there was very great light. Their enemies heard their voices but did not see their forms, and counted them happy for not having suffered,
2 and were thankful that your holy ones, though previously wronged, were doing them no injury; and they begged their pardon for having been at variance with them.
3 Therefore you provided a flaming pillar of fire
   as a guide for your people's unknown journey,
   and a harmless sun for their glorious wandering.
4 For their enemies deserved to be deprived of light and imprisoned in
darkness, those who had kept your children imprisoned,
   through whom the imperishable light of the law was to be given
to the world.

The sixth contrast

5 When they had resolved to kill the infants of your holy ones,
   and one child had been abandoned and rescued,
   you in punishment took away a multitude of their children;
   and you destroyed them all together by a mighty flood.
6 That night was made known beforehand to our ancestors,
   so that they might rejoice in sure knowledge of the oaths in
   which they trusted.
7 The deliverance of the righteous and the destruction of their enemies
   were expected by your people.
8 For by the same means by which you punished our enemies
   you called us to yourself and glorified us.
9 For in secret the holy children of good people offered sacrifices,
   and with one accord agreed to the divine law,
   so that the saints would share alike the same things,
   both blessings and dangers;
   and already they were singing the praises of the ancestors.
10 But the discordant cry of their enemies echoed back,
   and their piteous lament for their children was spread abroad.
11 The slave was punished with the same penalty as the master,
   and the commoner suffered the same loss as the king;
12 and they all together, by the one form of death,
   had corpses too many to count.
   For the living were not sufficient even to bury them,
   since in one instant their most valued children had been
   destroyed.
13 For though they had disbelieved everything because of their magic
   arts, yet, when their firstborn were destroyed, they
   acknowledged your people to be God's child.
14 For while gentle silence enveloped all things, 
    and night in its swift course was now half gone, 
15 your all-powerful word leaped from heaven, from the royal throne, 
    into the midst of the land that was doomed, a stern warrior 
16 carrying the sharp sword of your authentic command, 
    and stood and filled all things with death, 
    and touched heaven while standing on the earth. 
17 Then at once apparitions in dreadful dreams greatly troubled them, 
    and unexpected fears assailed them; 
18 and one here and another there, hurled down half dead, 
    made known why they were dying; 
19 for the dreams that disturbed them forewarned them of this, 
    so that they might not perish without knowing why they 
    suffered. 
20 The experience of death touched also the righteous, 
    and a plague came upon the multitude in the desert, 
    but the wrath did not long continue. 
21 For a blameless man was quick to act as their champion; 
    he brought forward the shield of his ministry, 
    prayer and propitiation by incense; 
    he withstood the anger and put an end to the disaster, 
    showing that he was your servant. 
22 He conquered the wrath not by strength of body, 
    not by force of arms, 
    but by his word he subdued the avenger, 
    appealing to the oaths and covenants given to our ancestors. 
23 For when the dead had already fallen on one another in heaps, 
    he intervened and held back the wrath, 
    and cut off its way to the living. 
24 For on his long robe the whole world was depicted, 
    and the glories of the ancestors were engraved on the four rows 
    of stones, and your majesty was on the diadem upon his head. 
25 To these the destroyer yielded, these he feared; 
    for merely to test the wrath was enough.
The seventh contrast

1 But the ungodly were assailed to the end by pitiless anger, for God knew in advance even their future actions:
2 how, though they themselves had permitted your people to depart and hastily sent them out, they would change their minds and pursue them.
3 For while they were still engaged in mourning, and were lamenting at the graves of their dead, they reached another foolish decision, and pursued as fugitives those whom they had begged and compelled to leave.
4 For the fate they deserved drew them on to this end, and made them forget what had happened, in order that they might fill up the punishment that their torments still lacked,
5 and that your people might experience an incredible journey, but they themselves might meet a strange death.

6 For the whole creation in its nature was fashioned anew, complying with your commands, so that your children might be kept unharmed.
7 The cloud was seen overshadowing the camp, and dry land emerging where water had stood before, an unhindered way out of the Red Sea, and a grassy plain out of the raging waves,
8 where those protected by your hand passed through as one nation, after gazing on marvelous wonders.
9 For they ranged like horses, and leaped like lambs, praising you, O Lord, who delivered them.
10 For they still recalled the events of their sojourn, how instead of producing animals the earth brought forth gnats, and instead of fish the river spewed out vast numbers of frogs.
11 Afterward they saw also a new kind of birds, when desire led them to ask for luxurious food;
12 for, to give them relief, quails came up from the sea.

13 The punishments did not come upon the sinners without prior signs in the violence of thunder, for they justly suffered because of their wicked acts; for they practiced a more bitter hatred of strangers.

14 Others had refused to receive strangers when they came to them, but these made slaves of guests who were their benefactors.

15 And not only so — but, while punishment of some sort will come upon the former for having received strangers with hostility, the latter, having first received them with festal celebrations, afterward afflicted with terrible sufferings those who had already shared the same rights.

16 They were stricken also with loss of sight — just as were those at the door of the righteous man — when, surrounded by yawning darkness, all of them tried to find the way through their own doors.

18 For the elements changed places with one another, as on a harp the notes vary the nature of the rhythm, while each note remains the same. This may be clearly inferred from the sight of what took place.

19 For land animals were transformed into water creatures, and creatures that swim moved over to the land.

20 Fire even in water retained its normal power, and water forgot its fire-quenching nature.

21 Flames, on the contrary, failed to consume the flesh of perishable creatures that walked among them, nor did they melt the crystalline, quick-melting kind of heavenly food.

The concluding doxology

22 For in everything, O Lord, you have exalted and glorified your people, and you have not neglected to help them at all times and in all places.
(Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach)

Introduction

The names by which this book is known reflect something of its origin and history. Sirach is the name of the author, Jesus son of Eleazar son of Sirach (50.27), in Hebrew, Yeshua be El-azar ben Sira. Although the book was highly regarded in rabbinic literature and even cited in the Talmud, it did not achieve canonical status. The early Christian church, however, did consider it canonical. Although originally it was titled "The Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach" in Greek and Old Latin manuscripts, many manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate referred to it as "Ecclesiasticus," that is, "the Church's book." The Protestant reformers, in keeping with their practice of conforming the Christian Old Testament to the book deemed canonical in the Hebrew scriptures, relegated it to the Apocrypha.

Because the book was not canonical in Judaism, the original Hebrew text was lost to the western world from about 400 to 1900 CE; the book survived in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and other translations. Since about 1900 CE fragmentary copies of the Hebrew, dating from antiquity to the Middle Ages, have been discovered in various places: Qumran, Masada, and the Geniza (i.e., storage room) of a medieval Cairo synagogue. In this way two-thirds of the Hebrew text has been recovered. The translation here is one of a critically established text, using both Hebrew and other witnesses to the original. The reader will occasionally find a slightly different verse numbering from that in traditional renderings, since the NRSV follows the numbering of the critical text edited by J. Ziegler.

Ben Sira composed his work in Jerusalem sometime before 180 BCE (see his description in 50.1-24 of Simon II, high priest from 219-196). Thus he wrote before the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus IV Epiphanes
and the ensuing Maccabean revolt (168-164 BCE). Sometime after 132 BCE (see the Prologue) his grandson translated the original Hebrew into Greek. The grandson rightly stresses Ben Sira's profound knowledge of Hebrew traditions (designated in the Prologue as "the Law and the Prophets and the other books" — already the threefold division of the Hebrew Bible was in formation).

Like the book of Proverbs, Sirach stresses characteristic wisdom teachings: prudent speech, wealth and poverty, honesty, diligence, choice of friends, sin and death, retribution, and wisdom itself. Unlike Proverbs 10ff., individual proverbs are not set apart, but are incorporated into smooth-flowing poems of some length (often 22 lines in accordance with the number of letters of the Hebrew alphabet). The doctrine is surprisingly traditional, almost as if Job and Ecclesiastes had never been written. Ben Sira is not unaware of the problem of suffering (2.1-6; 11.14; 40.1-10), but he firmly believes in the justice of divine retribution. God will reward all according to their deserts (15.11-16.23). There is no intimation of a future life with God in the Hebrew text as one begins to find in some Jewish literature of the Hellenistic age (e.g., 2 Macc 7.9; Wis 5.15-16); rather, all go to Sheol, the traditional abode of the dead (14.12-19; 38.16-23). This is the usual view of the Hebrew Bible, where immortality is understood only in terms of one's progeny and good name (44.13-15).

The earlier biblical wisdom literature lacks reference to Israel's sacred history and covenantal traditions. Sirach, in contrast, reprises biblical history in the "Hymn in Honor of Our Ancestors" (chs 44-49), and clearly identifies the figure of Wisdom with the Torah or law (24.23). Unlike earlier wisdom writings, Sirach is immersed in the environment of Jerusalem Temple worship and sacrifice (35.1-12; 50.1-24). Nevertheless, the book belongs definitely to the genre of wisdom literature, with its stress on the lessons of experience and on the "fear of the Lord" (1.11-30; 25.10-11; 40.25-27).

Ben Sira describes his profession as a "scribe," or scholar of the sacred writings (39.1-11) and invites students to his school (51.23). The work's original addresses were young men preparing for leading adult roles in the Jewish community. This is evident in many aspects of the book,
including its treatment of women. The vivid portrayal of Wisdom as a sublime woman, sometimes with erotic overtones (e.g., 14.20-27; 15.2; and especially the Hebrew version of 51.13-30), seem particularly designed to capture the imagination of Ben Sira's young male students. Ben Sira's teachings about actual women are androcentric at best, as in his advice concerning marriage (26.13-18; 36.26-31); at times he expresses an untempered misogyny (e.g., 42.13-14).

Sirach's teachings are not arranged in a logical sequence. Reading straight through the book from beginning to end, therefore is not necessarily the best approach. Good places to start reading Sirach are the two pivotal poems on personified Wisdom (1.1-30; 24.1-34; each introduces a major collection of instructional material) and the hymn of praise to Israel's ancestors (44.1-49.16).

The book consists of three major blocks of teaching: 1.1-23.27; 24.1-42.14; and 42.15-50.24) In its current form these are preceded by the Prologue and followed by concluding comments and additions (50.25-51.30). Each of the first two collections begin with a poem of praise of Wisdom (1.1-30; 24.1-34); the third collection consists entirely of hymns of praise, of the creator (42.15-43.33), of Israel's ancestors (44.1-49.16), and of the high priest Simon (50.1-24).

Sirach

THE PROLOGUE

Many great teachings have been given to us through the Law and the Prophets and the others that followed them, and for these we should praise Israel for instruction and wisdom. Now, those who read the scriptures must not only themselves understand them, but must also as lovers of learning be able through the spoken and written word to help the outsiders. So my grandfather Jesus, who had devoted himself especially to the reading of the Law and the Prophets and the other books of our ancestors, and had acquired considerable proficiency in
them, was himself also led to write something pertaining to instruction and wisdom, so that by becoming familiar also with his book those who love learning might make even greater progress in living according to the law.

You are invited therefore to read it with goodwill and attention, and to be indulgent in cases where, despite our diligent labor in translating, we may seem to have rendered some phrases imperfectly. For what was originally expressed in Hebrew does not have exactly the same sense when translated into another language. Not only this book, but even the Law itself, the Prophecies, and the rest of the books differ not a little when read in the original.

When I came to Egypt in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Euergetes and stayed for some time, I found opportunity for no little instruction. It seemed highly necessary that I should myself devote some diligence and labor to the translation of this book. During that time I have applied my skill day and night to complete and publish the book for those living abroad who wished to gain learning and are disposed to live according to the law.

[Sirach 1]
Wisdom, God's unfathomable gift

1 All wisdom is from the Lord,
   and with him it remains forever.
2 The sand of the sea, the drops of rain,
   and the days of eternity — who can count them?
3 The height of heaven, the breadth of the earth,
   the abyss, and wisdom — who can search them out?
4 Wisdom was created before all other things,
   and prudent understanding from eternity.

5 The source of wisdom is God's word in the highest heaven,
   and her ways are the eternal commandments.

6 The root of wisdom — to whom has it been revealed?
   Her subtleties — who knows them?
7 The knowledge of wisdom — to whom was it manifested?  
And her abundant experience — who has understood it?

8 There is but one who is wise, greatly to be feared,  
seated upon his throne — the Lord.
9 It is he who created her;  
he saw her and took her measure;  
he poured her out upon all his works,
10 upon all the living according to his gift;  
he lavished her upon those who love him.  
Love of the Lord is glorious wisdom; to those whom he  
appears he apportions her, that they may see him.

Wisdom as fear of the Lord

11 The fear of the Lord is glory and exultation,  
and gladness and a crown of rejoicing.
12 The fear of the Lord delights the heart,  
and gives gladness and joy and long life.
The fear of the Lord is a gift from the Lord;  
also for love he makes firm paths.
13 Those who fear the Lord will have a happy end;  
on the day of their death they will be blessed.

14 To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;  
she is created with the faithful in the womb.
15 She made among human beings an eternal foundation,  
and among their descendants she will abide faithfully.
16 To fear the Lord is fullness of wisdom;  
she inebriates mortals with her fruits;
17 she fills their whole house with desirable goods,  
and their storehouses with her produce.
18 The fear of the Lord is the crown of wisdom,  
making peace and perfect health to flourish.  
Both are gifts of God for peace;  
glory opens out for those who love him.  
He saw her and took her measure.
19 She rained down knowledge and discerning comprehension, and she heightened the glory of those who held her fast.
20 To fear the Lord is the root of wisdom, and her branches are long life.

21 The fear of the Lord drives away sins; and where it abides, it will turn away all anger.

22 Unjust anger cannot be justified, for anger tips the scale to one's ruin.
23 Those who are patient stay calm until the right moment, and then cheerfulness comes back to them.
24 They hold back their words until the right moment; then the lips of many tell of their good sense.

25 In the treasuries of wisdom are wise sayings, but godliness is an abomination to a sinner.
26 If you desire wisdom, keep the commandments, and the Lord will lavish her upon you.
27 For the fear of the Lord is wisdom and discipline, fidelity and humility are his delight.

28 Do not disobey the fear of the Lord; do not approach him with a divided mind.
29 Do not be a hypocrite before others, and keep watch over your lips.
30 Do not exalt yourself, or you may fall and bring dishonor upon yourself. The Lord will reveal your secrets and overthrow you before the whole congregation, because you did not come in the fear of the Lord, and your heart was full of deceit.
[Sirach 2]
Trust in God

1 My child, when you come to serve the Lord,
   prepare yourself for testing.
2 Set your heart right and be steadfast,
   and do not be impetuous in time of calamity.
3 Cling to him and do not depart,
   so that your last days may be prosperous.
4 Accept whatever befalls you,
   and in times of humiliation be patient.
5 For gold is tested in the fire,
   and those found acceptable, in the furnace of humiliation.
   In sickness and poverty put your trust in him.
6 Trust in him, and he will help you;
   make your ways straight, and hope in him.

7 You who fear the Lord, wait for his mercy;
   do not stray, or else you may fall.
8 You who fear the Lord, trust in him,
   and your reward will not be lost.
9 You who fear the Lord, hope for good things,
   for lasting joy and mercy. For his reward is
   an everlasting gift with joy.
10 Consider the generations of old and see:
    has anyone trusted in the Lord and been disappointed?
    Or has anyone persevered in the fear of the Lord and
    been forsaken?
    Or has anyone called upon him and been neglected?
11 For the Lord is compassionate and merciful;
    he forgives sins and saves in time of distress.

12 Woe to timid hearts and to slack hands,
    and to the sinner who walks a double path!
13 Woe to the fainthearted who have no trust!
    Therefore they will have no shelter.
14 Woe to you who have lost your nerve!
    What will you do when the LORD's reckoning comes?
15 Those who fear the Lord do not disobey his words, and those who love him keep his ways.
16 Those who fear the Lord seek to please him, and those who love him are filled with his law.
17 Those who fear the Lord prepare their hearts, and humble themselves before him.
18 Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, but not into the hands of mortals; for equal to his majesty is his mercy, and equal to his name are his works.

[Sirach 3]
Honor of parents

1 Listen to me your father, O children; act accordingly, that you may be kept in safety.
2 For the Lord honors a father above his children, and he confirms a mother's right over her children.
3 Those who honor their father atone for sins, and those who respect their mother are like those who lay up treasure.
4 Those who honor their father will have joy in their own children, and when they pray they will be heard.
5 Those who respect their father will have long life, and those who honor their mother obey the Lord;
6 Those who fear the Lord honor their father; they will serve their parents as their masters.
7 Honor your father by word and deed, that his blessing may come upon you.
8 For a father's blessing strengthens the houses of the children, but a mother's curse uproots their foundations.
9 Do not glorify yourself by dishonoring your father, for your father's dishonor is no glory to you.
10 The glory of one's father is one's own glory, and it is a disgrace for children not to respect their mother.
12 My child, help your father in his old age,  
and do not grieve him as long as he lives;  
13 even if his mind fails, be patient with him;  
because you have all your faculties do not despise him.  
14 For kindness to a father will not be forgotten,  
and will be credited to you against your sins;  
15 in the day of your distress it will be remembered in your favor;  
like frost in fair weather, your sins will melt away.  
16 Whoever forsakes a father is like a blasphemer,  
and whoever angers a mother is cursed by the Lord.

Humility

17 My child, perform your tasks with humility;  
then you will be loved by those whom God accepts.  
18 The greater you are, the more you must humble yourself;  
so you will find favor in the sight of the Lord.  
19 Many are lofty and renowned,  
but to the humble he reveals his secrets.  
20 For great is the might of the Lord;  
but by the humble he is glorified.  
21 Neither seek what is too difficult for you,  
nor investigate what is beyond your power.  
22 Reflect upon what you have been commanded,  
for what is hidden is not your concern.  
23 Do not meddle in matters that are beyond you,  
for more than you can understand has been shown you.  
24 For their conceit has led many astray,  
and wrong opinion has impaired their judgment.

Stubbornness

25 Without eyes there is no light;  
without knowledge there is no wisdom.  
26 A stubborn mind will fare badly at the end,  
and whoever loves danger will perish in it.  
27 A stubborn mind will be burdened by troubles,  
and the sinner adds sin to sins.
28 When calamity befalls the proud, there is no healing, for an evil plant has taken root in him.
29 The mind of the intelligent appreciates proverbs, and an attentive ear is the desire of the wise.

Care for the Poor

30 As water extinguishes a blazing fire, so almsgiving atones for sin.
31 Those who repay favors give thought to the future; when they fall they will find support.

[Sirach 4]

1 My child, do not cheat the poor of their living, and do not keep needy eyes waiting.
2 Do not grieve the hungry, or anger one in need.
3 Do not add to the troubles of the desperate, or delay giving to the needy.
4 Do not reject a suppliant in distress, or turn your face away from the poor.
5 Do not avert your eye from the needy, and give no one reason to curse you;
6 for if in bitterness of soul some should curse you, their Creator will hear their prayer.

7 Endear yourself to the congregation; bow your head low to the great.
8 Give a hearing to the poor, and return their greeting politely.
9 Rescue the oppressed from the oppressor; and do not be hesitant in giving a verdict.
10 Be a father to orphans, and be like a husband to their mother; you will then be like a son of the Most High, and he will love you more than does your mother.
Wisdom's rewards and trials

11 Wisdom teaches her children
    and gives help to those who seek her.
12 Whoever loves her loves life,
    and those who seek her from early morning are filled with joy.
13 Whoever holds her fast inherits glory,
    and the Lord blesses the place she enters.
14 Those who serve her minister to the Holy One;
    the Lord loves those who love her.
15 Those who obey her will judge the nations,
    and all who listen to her will live secure.
16 If they remain faithful, they will inherit her;
    their descendants will also obtain her.
17 For at first she will walk with them on tortuous paths;
    she will bring fear and dread upon them,
    and will torment them by her discipline
    until she trusts them,
    and she will test them with her ordinances.
18 Then she will come straight back to them again and gladden them,
    and will reveal her secrets to them.
19 If they go astray she will forsake them,
    and hand them over to their ruin.

On reticence, true and false

20 Watch for the opportune time, and beware of evil,
    and do not be ashamed to be yourself.
21 For there is a shame that leads to sin,
    and there is a shame that is glory and favor.
22 Do not show partiality, to your own harm,
    or deference, to your downfall.
23 Do not refrain from speaking at the proper moment,
    and do not hide your wisdom.
24 For wisdom becomes known through speech,
    and education through the words of the tongue.
25 Never speak against the truth,
    but be ashamed of your ignorance.
26 Do not be ashamed to confess your sins,
    and do not try to stop the current of a river.
27 Do not subject yourself to a fool,
    or show partiality to a ruler.
28 Fight to the death for truth,
    and the Lord God will fight for you.

29 Do not be reckless in your speech,
    or sluggish and remiss in your deeds.
30 Do not be like a lion in your home,
    or suspicious of your servants.
31 Do not let your hand be stretched out to receive
    and closed when it is time to give.

[Sirach 5]
Against presumption; false reliance on wealth

1 Do not rely on your wealth,
   or say, "I have enough."
2 Do not follow your inclination and strength
   in pursuing the desires of your heart.
3 Do not say, "Who can have power over me?"
   for the Lord will surely punish you.

4 Do not say, "I sinned, yet what has happened to me?"
   for the Lord is slow to anger.
5 Do not be so confident of forgiveness
   that you add sin to sin.
6 Do not say, "His mercy is great,
   he will forgive the multitude of my sins,"
   for both mercy and wrath are with him,
   and his anger will rest on sinners.
7 Do not delay to turn back to the Lord,
   and do not postpone it from day to day;
   for suddenly the wrath of the Lord will come upon you,
   and at the time of punishment you will perish.
8 Do not depend on dishonest wealth,
   for it will not benefit you on the day of calamity.
Honesty and self-control

9 Do not winnow in every wind,
   or follow every path, so it is with the double-tongued sinner.
10 Stand firm for what you know,
   and let your speech be consistent.
11 Be quick to hear,
   but deliberate in answering.
12 If you know what to say, answer your neighbor;
   but if not, put your hand over your mouth.

13 Honor and dishonor come from speaking,
   and the tongue of mortals may be their downfall.
14 Do not be called double-tongued
   and do not lay traps with your tongue;
   for shame comes to the thief,
   and severe condemnation to the double-tongued.
15 In great and small matters cause no harm,

[Sirach 6]

1 and do not become an enemy instead of a friend;
   for a bad name incurs shame and reproach;
   so it is with the double-tongued sinner.

2 Do not fall into the grip of passion,
   or you may be torn apart as by a bull.
3 Your leaves will be devoured and your fruit destroyed,
   and you will be left like a withered tree.
4 Evil passion destroys those who have it,
   and makes them the laughingstock of their enemies.

True and false friendship

5 Pleasant speech multiplies friends,
   and a gracious tongue multiplies courtesies.
6 Let those who are friendly with you be many,
   but let your advisers be one in a thousand.
7 When you gain friends, gain them through testing, and do not trust them hastily.
8 For there are friends who are such when it suits them, but they will not stand by you in time of trouble.
9 And there are friends who change into enemies, and tell of the quarrel to your disgrace.
10 And there are friends who sit at your table, but they will not stand by you in time of trouble.
11 When you are prosperous, they become your second self, and lord it over your servants;
12 but if you are brought low, they turn against you, and hide themselves from you.
13 Keep away from your enemies, and be on guard with your friends.

14 Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter: whoever finds one has found a treasure.
15 Faithful friends are beyond price; no amount can balance their worth.
16 Faithful friends are life-saving medicine; and those who fear the Lord will find them.
17 Those who fear the Lord direct their friendship aright, for as they are, so are their neighbors also.

**Wisdom's discipline**

18 My child, from your youth choose discipline, and when you have gray hair you will still find wisdom.
19 Come to her like one who plows and sows, and wait for her good harvest.
   For when you cultivate her you will toil but little, and soon you will eat of her produce.
20 She seems very harsh to the undisciplined; fools cannot remain with her.
21 She will be like a heavy stone to test them, and they will not delay in casting her aside.
22 For wisdom is like her name; she is not readily perceived by many.
23 Listen, my child, and accept my judgment; 
do not reject my counsel.
24 Put your feet into her fetters, 
and your neck into her collar.
25 Bend your shoulders and carry her, 
and do not fret under her bonds.
26 Come to her with all your soul, 
and keep her ways with all your might.
27 Search out and seek, and she will become known to you; 
and when you get hold of her, do not let her go.
28 For at last you will find the rest she gives, 
and she will be changed into joy for you.
29 Then her fetters will become for you a strong defense, 
and her collar a glorious robe.
30 Her yoke is a golden ornament, 
and her bonds a purple cord.
31 You will wear her like a glorious robe, 
and put her on like a splendid crown.

32 If you are willing, my child, you can be disciplined, 
and if you apply yourself you will become clever.
33 If you love to listen you will gain knowledge, 
and if you pay attention you will become wise.
34 Stand in the company of the elders. 
Who is wise? Attach yourself to such a one.
35 Be ready to listen to every godly discourse, 
and let no wise proverbs escape you.
36 If you see an intelligent person, rise early to visit him; 
let your foot wear out his doorstep.
37 Reflect on the statutes of the Lord, 
and meditate at all times on his commandments. 
It is he who will give insight to your mind, 
and your desire for wisdom will be granted.
[Sirach 7]  
Ethical conduct

1 Do no evil, and evil will never overtake you.  
2 Stay away from wrong, and it will turn away from you.  
3 Do not sow in the furrows of injustice,  
   and you will not reap a sevenfold crop.

4 Do not seek from the Lord high office,  
   or the seat of honor from the king.  
5 Do not assert your righteousness before the Lord,  
   or display your wisdom before the king.  
6 Do not seek to become a judge,  
   or you may be unable to root out injustice;  
   you may be partial to the powerful,  
   and so mar your integrity.  
7 Commit no offense against the public,  
   and do not disgrace yourself among the people.

8 Do not commit a sin twice;  
   not even for one will you go unpunished.  
9 Do not say, "He will consider the great number of my gifts,  
   and when I make an offering to the Most High God, he will accept it."

10 Do not grow weary when you pray;  
   do not neglect to give alms.  
11 Do not ridicule a person who is embittered in spirit,  
   for there is One who humbles and exalts.  
12 Do not devise a lie against your brother,  
   or do the same to a friend.  
13 Refuse to utter any lie,  
   for it is a habit that results in no good.  
14 Do not babble in the assembly of the elders,  
   and do not repeat yourself when you pray.

15 Do not hate hard labor  
   or farm work, which was created by the Most High.
16 Do not enroll in the ranks of sinners;  
    remember that retribution does not delay.  
17 Humble yourself to the utmost,  
    for the punishment of the ungodly is fire and worms.

**Authority in the household**

18 Do not exchange a friend for money,  
    or a real brother for the gold of Ophir.  
19 Do not dismiss a wise and good wife,  
    for her charm is worth more than gold.  
20 Do not abuse slaves who work faithfully,  
    or hired laborers who devote themselves to their task.  
21 Let your soul love intelligent slaves;  
    do not withhold from them their freedom.

22 Do you have cattle? Look after them;  
    if they are profitable to you, keep them.  
23 Do you have children? Discipline them,  
    and make them obedient from their youth.  
24 Do you have daughters? Be concerned for their chastity,  
    and do not show yourself too indulgent with them.  
25 Give a daughter in marriage, and you complete a great task;  
    but give her to a sensible man.  
26 Do you have a wife who pleases you? Do not divorce her;  
    but do not trust yourself to one whom you detest.

27 With all your heart honor your father,  
    and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother.  
28 Remember that it was of your parents you were born;  
    how can you repay what they have given to you?

**Obligations to priests and to the poor**

29 With all your soul fear the Lord,  
    and revere his priests.  
30 With all your might love your Maker,  
    and do not neglect his ministers.
31 Fear the Lord and honor the priest,
   and give him his portion, as you have been commanded:
   the first fruits, the guilt offering, the gift of the shoulders,
   the sacrifice of sanctification, and the first fruits of the
   holy things.

32 Stretch out your hand to the poor,
   so that your blessing may be complete.
33 Give graciously to all the living;
   do not withhold kindness even from the dead.
34 Do not avoid those who weep,
   but mourn with those who mourn.
35 Do not hesitate to visit the sick,
   because for such deeds you will be loved.
36 In all you do, remember the end of your life,
   and then you will never sin.

[Sirach 8]
Caution in relationships

1 Do not contend with the powerful,
   or you may fall into their hands.
2 Do not quarrel with the rich,
   in case their resources outweigh yours;
   for gold has ruined many,
   and has perverted the minds of kings.
3 Do not argue with the loud of mouth,
   and do not heap wood on their fire.
4 Do not make fun of one who is ill-bred,
   or your ancestors may be insulted.
5 Do not reproach one who is turning away from sin;
   remember that we all deserve punishment.
6 Do not disdain one who is old,
   for some of us are also growing old.
7 Do not rejoice over anyone's death;
   remember that we must all die.
8 Do not slight the discourse of the sages,  
    but busy yourself with their maxims;  
    because from them you will learn discipline  
    and how to serve princes.
9 Do not ignore the discourse of the aged,  
    for they themselves learned from their parents;  
    from them you learn how to understand  
    and to give an answer when the need arises.

10 Do not kindle the coals of sinners,  
    or you may be burned in their flaming fire.
11 Do not let the insolent bring you to your feet,  
    or they may lie in ambush against your words.
12 Do not lend to one who is stronger than you;  
    but if you do lend anything, count it as a loss.
13 Do not give surety beyond your means;  
    but if you give surety, be prepared to pay.

14 Do not go to law against a judge,  
    for the decision will favor him because of his standing.
15 Do not go traveling with the reckless,  
    or they will be burdensome to you;  
    for they will act as they please,  
    and through their folly you will perish with them.
16 Do not pick a fight with the quick-tempered,  
    and do not journey with them through lonely country,  
    because bloodshed means nothing to them,  
    and where no help is at hand, they will strike you down.
17 Do not consult with fools,  
    for they cannot keep a secret.
18 In the presence of strangers do nothing that is to be kept secret,  
    for you do not know what they will divulge.
19 Do not reveal your thoughts to anyone,  
    or you may drive away your happiness.
[Sirach 9]

Warnings about women

1 Do not be jealous of the wife of your bosom,  
   or you will teach her an evil lesson to your own hurt.
2 Do not give yourself to a woman  
   and let her trample down your strength.
3 Do not go near a loose woman,  
   or you will fall into her snares.
4 Do not dally with a singing girl,  
   or you will be caught by her tricks.
5 Do not look intently at a virgin,  
   or you may stumble and incur penalties for her.
6 Do not give yourself to prostitutes,  
   or you may lose your inheritance.
7 Do not look around in the streets of a city,  
   or wander about in its deserted sections.
8 Turn away your eyes from a shapely woman,  
   and do not gaze at beauty belonging to another;  
   many have been seduced by a woman's beauty,  
   and by it passion is kindled like a fire.
9 Never dine with another man's wife,  
   or revel with her at wine;  
   or your heart may turn aside to her,  
   and in blood you may be plunged into destruction.

Friends and associates

10 Do not abandon old friends,  
    for new ones cannot equal them.  
    A new friend is like new wine;  
    when it has aged, you can drink it with pleasure.

11 Do not envy the success of sinners,  
    for you do not know what their end will be like.
12 Do not delight in what pleases the ungodly;  
    remember that they will not be held guiltless all their lives.
13 Keep far from those who have power to kill,
    and you will not be haunted by the fear of death.
But if you approach them, make no misstep,
    or they may rob you of your life.
Know that you are stepping among snares,
    and that you are walking on the city battlements.

14 As much as you can, aim to know your neighbors,
    and consult with the wise.
15 Let your conversation be with intelligent people,
    and let all your discussion be about the law of the Most High.
16 Let the righteous be your dinner companions,
    and let your glory be in the fear of the Lord.

Concerning Rulers

17 A work is praised for the skill of the artisan;
    so a people's leader is proved wise by his words.
18 The loud of mouth are feared in their city,
    and the one who is reckless in speech is hated.

[Sirach 10]

1 A wise magistrate educates his people,
    and the rule of an intelligent person is well ordered.
2 As the people's judge is, so are his officials;
    as the ruler of the city is, so are all its inhabitants.
3 An undisciplined king ruins his people,
    but a city becomes fit to live in through the understanding
    of its rulers.
4 The government of the earth is in the hand of the Lord,
    and over it he will raise up the right leader for the time.
5 Human success is in the hand of the Lord,
    and it is he who confers honor upon the lawgiver.
Concerning arrogance and pride

6 Do not get angry with your neighbor for every injury, and do not resort to acts of insolence.

7 Arrogance is hateful to the Lord and to mortals, and injustice is outrageous to both.

8 Sovereignty passes from nation to nation on account of injustice and insolence and wealth.

9 How can dust and ashes be proud? Even in life the human body decays.
    Nothing is more wicked than one who loves money, for such a person puts his own soul up for sale.

10 A long illness baffles the physician; the king of today will die tomorrow.

11 For when one is dead he inherits maggots and vermin and worms.

12 The beginning of human pride is to forsake the Lord; the heart has withdrawn from its Maker.

13 For the beginning of pride is sin, and the one who clings to it pours out abominations. Therefore the Lord brings upon them unheard-of calamities, and destroys them completely.

14 The Lord overthrows the thrones of rulers, and enthrones the lowly in their place.

15 The Lord plucks up the roots of the nations, and plants the humble in their place.

16 The Lord lays waste the lands of the nations, and destroys them to the foundations of the earth.

17 He removes some of them and destroys them, and erases the memory of them from the earth.

18 Pride was not created for human beings, or violent anger for those born of women.
True honor is compatible with humility

19 Whose offspring are worthy of honor?
   Human offspring.
Whose offspring are worthy of honor?
   Those who fear the Lord.
Whose offspring are unworthy of honor?
   Human offspring.
Whose offspring are unworthy of honor?
   Those who break the commandments.
20 Among family members their leader is worthy of honor,
   but those who fear the Lord are worthy of honor in his eyes.
21 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of acceptance;
   obduracy and pride are the beginning of rejection.
22 The rich, and the eminent, and the poor —
   their glory is the fear of the Lord.
23 It is not right to despise one who is intelligent but poor,
   and it is not proper to honor one who is sinful.
24 The prince and the judge and the ruler are honored,
   but none of them is greater than the one who fears the Lord.
25 Free citizens will serve a wise servant,
   and an intelligent person will not complain.

26 Do not make a display of your wisdom when you do your work,
   and do not boast when you are in need.
27 Better is the worker who has goods in plenty
   than the boaster who lacks bread.

28 My child, honor yourself with humility,
   and give yourself the esteem you deserve.
29 Who will acquit those who condemn themselves?
   And who will honor those who dishonor themselves?
30 The poor are honored for their knowledge,
   while the rich are honored for their wealth.
31 One who is honored in poverty, how much more in wealth!
   And one dishonored in wealth, how much more in poverty!
[Sirach 11]

1 The wisdom of the humble lifts their heads high, and seats them among the great.  
2 Do not praise individuals for their good looks, or loathe anyone because of appearance alone.  
3 The bee is small among flying creatures, but what it produces is the best of sweet things.  
4 Do not boast about wearing fine clothes, and do not exalt yourself when you are honored; for the works of the Lord are wonderful, and his works are concealed from humankind.  
5 Many kings have had to sit on the ground, but one who was never thought of has worn a crown.  
6 Many rulers have been utterly disgraced, and the honored have been handed over to others.  

Against hasty and rash actions  

7 Do not find fault before you investigate; examine first, and then criticize.  
8 Do not answer before you listen, and do not interrupt when another is speaking.  
9 Do not argue about a matter that does not concern you, and do not sit with sinners when they judge a case.  

Do not strive for material security  

10 My child, do not busy yourself with many matters; if you multiply activities, you will not be held blameless. If you pursue, you will not overtake, and by fleeing you will not escape.  
11 There are those who work and struggle and hurry, but are so much the more in want.  
12 There are others who are slow and need help, who lack strength and abound in poverty; but the eyes of the Lord look kindly upon them; he lifts them out of their lowly condition
13 and raises up their heads  
   to the amazement of the many.

14 Good things and bad, life and death,  
   poverty and wealth, come from the Lord.  
15 Wisdom, understanding, and knowledge of the law come from the Lord;  
   affection and the ways of good works come from him.  
16 Error and darkness were created with sinners;  
   evil grows old with those who take pride in malice.  
17 The Lord's gift remains with the devout,  
   and his favor brings lasting success.  
18 One becomes rich through diligence and self-denial,  
   and the reward allotted to him is this:  
19 when he says, "I have found rest,  
   and now I shall feast on my goods!"  
   he does not know how long it will be  
   until he leaves them to others and dies.

Retribution

20 Stand by your agreement and attend to it,  
   and grow old in your work.  
21 Do not wonder at the works of a sinner,  
   but trust in the Lord and keep at your job;  
   for it is easy in the sight of the Lord  
   to make the poor rich suddenly, in an instant.  
22 The blessing of the Lord is the reward of the pious,  
   and quickly God causes his blessing to flourish.  
23 Do not say, "What do I need,  
   and what further benefit can be mine?"  
24 Do not say, "I have enough,  
   and what harm can come to me now?"  
25 In the day of prosperity, adversity is forgotten,  
   and in the day of adversity, prosperity is not remembered.  
26 For it is easy for the Lord on the day of death  
   to reward individuals according to their conduct.  
27 An hour's misery makes one forget past delights,  
   and at the close of one's life one's deeds are revealed.
28 Call no one happy before his death; 
    by how he ends, a person becomes known.

Choosing companions

29 Do not invite everyone into your home, 
    for many are the tricks of the crafty.
30 Like a decoy partridge in a cage, so is the mind of the proud, 
    and like spies they observe your weakness;
31 for they lie in wait, turning good into evil, 
    and to worthy actions they attach blame.
32 From a spark many coals are kindled, 
    and a sinner lies in wait to shed blood.
33 Beware of scoundrels, for they devise evil, 
    and they may ruin your reputation forever.
34 Receive strangers into your home and they will stir up trouble 
    for you, and will make you a stranger to your own family.

[Sirach 12]

1 If you do good, know to whom you do it, 
    and you will be thanked for your good deeds.
2 Do good to the devout, and you will be repaid — 
    if not by them, certainly by the Most High.
3 No good comes to one who persists in evil 
    or to one who does not give alms.
4 Give to the devout, but do not help the sinner.
5 Do good to the humble, but do not give to the ungodly; 
    hold back their bread, and do not give it to them, 
    for by means of it they might subdue you; 
    then you will receive twice as much evil 
    for all the good you have done to them.
6 For the Most High also hates sinners 
    and will inflict punishment on the ungodly, 
    and he is keeping them for the day of their punishment.
7 Give to the one who is good, but do not help the sinner.
8 A friend is not known in prosperity, 
    nor is an enemy hidden in adversity.
9 One's enemies are friendly when one prospers,
   but in adversity even one's friend disappears.
10 Never trust your enemy,
   for like corrosion in copper, so is his wickedness.
11 Even if he humbles himself and walks bowed down,
   take care to be on your guard against him.
   Be to him like one who polishes a mirror,
   to be sure it does not become completely tarnished.
12 Do not put him next to you,
   or he may overthrow you and take your place.
   Do not let him sit at your right hand,
   or else he may try to take your own seat,
   and at last you will realize the truth of my words,
   and be stung by what I have said.

13 Who pities a snake charmer when he is bitten,
   or all those who go near wild animals?
14 So no one pities a person who associates with a sinner
   and becomes involved in the other's sins.
15 He stands by you for a while,
   but if you falter, he will not be there.
16 An enemy speaks sweetly with his lips,
   but in his heart he plans to throw you into a pit;
   an enemy may have tears in his eyes,
   but if he finds an opportunity he will never have enough of
   your blood.
17 If evil comes upon you, you will find him there ahead of you;
   pretending to help, he will trip you up.
18 Then he will shake his head, and clap his hands,
   and whisper much, and show his true face.

[Sirach 13]
Warnings about associates

1 Whoever touches pitch gets dirty,
   and whoever associates with a proud person becomes like him.
2 Do not lift a weight too heavy for you, or associate with one mightier and richer than you. How can the clay pot associate with the iron kettle? The pot will strike against it and be smashed.

3 A rich person does wrong, and even adds insults; a poor person suffers wrong, and must add apologies.

4 A rich person will exploit you if you can be of use to him, but if you are in need he will abandon you.

5 If you own something, he will live with you; he will drain your resources without a qualm.

6 When he needs you he will deceive you, and will smile at you and encourage you; he will speak to you kindly and say, "What do you need?"

7 He will embarrass you with his delicacies, until he has drained you two or three times, and finally he will laugh at you.
    Should he see you afterwards, he will pass you by and shake his head at you.

8 Take care not to be led astray and humiliated when you are enjoying yourself.

9 When an influential person invites you, be reserved, and he will invite you more insistently.

10 Do not be forward, or you may be rebuffed; do not stand aloof, or you will be forgotten.

11 Do not try to treat him as an equal, or trust his lengthy conversations; for he will test you by prolonged talk, and while he smiles he will be examining you.

12 Cruel are those who do not keep your secrets; they will not spare you harm or imprisonment.

13 Be on your guard and very careful, for you are walking about with your own downfall.

14 When you hear these things in your sleep, wake up! During all your life love the Lord, and call on him for your salvation.
Rich and poor

15 Every creature loves its like,
    and every person the neighbor.
16 All living beings associate with their own kind,
    and people stick close to those like themselves.
17 What does a wolf have in common with a lamb?
    No more has a sinner with the devout.
18 What peace is there between a hyena and a dog?
    And what peace between the rich and the poor?
19 Wild asses in the wilderness are the prey of lions;
    likewise the poor are feeding grounds for the rich.
20 Humility is an abomination to the proud;
    likewise the poor are an abomination to the rich.

21 When the rich person totters, he is supported by friends,
    but when the humble falls, he is pushed away even by friends.
22 If the rich person slips, many come to the rescue;
    he speaks unseemly words, but they justify him.
    If the humble person slips, they even criticize him;
    he talks sense, but is not given a hearing.
23 The rich person speaks and all are silent;
    they extol to the clouds what he says.
    The poor person speaks and they say, "Who is this fellow?"
    And should he stumble, they even push him down.

Wealth and conscience

24 Riches are good if they are free from sin;
    poverty is evil only in the opinion of the ungodly.

25 The heart changes the countenance,
    either for good or for evil, and a glad heart
    makes a cheerful countenance.
26 The sign of a happy heart is a cheerful face,
    but to devise proverbs requires painful thinking.
[Sirach 14]

1 Happy are those who do not blunder with their lips, and need not suffer remorse for sin.
2 Happy are those whose hearts do not condemn them, and who have not given up their hope.

The proper use of wealth

3 Riches are inappropriate for a small-minded person; and of what use is wealth to a miser?
4 What he denies himself he collects for others; and others will live in luxury on his goods.
5 If one is mean to himself, to whom will he be generous? He will not enjoy his own riches.
6 No one is worse than one who is grudging to himself; this is the punishment for his meanness.
7 If ever he does good, it is by mistake; and in the end he reveals his meanness.
8 The miser is an evil person; he turns away and disregards people.
9 The eye of the greedy person is not satisfied with his share; greedy injustice withers the soul.
10 A miser begrudges bread, and it is lacking at his table.

11 My child, treat yourself well, according to your means, and present worthy offerings to the Lord.
12 Remember that death does not tarry, and the decree of Hades has not been shown to you.
13 Do good to friends before you die, and reach out and give to them as much as you can.
14 Do not deprive yourself of a day's enjoyment; do not let your share of desired good pass by you.
15 Will you not leave the fruit of your labors to another, and what you acquired by toil to be divided by lot?
16 Give, and take, and indulge yourself, because in Hades one cannot look for luxury.
17 All living beings become old like a garment,
   for the decree from of old is, "You must die!"
18 Like abundant leaves on a spreading tree
   that sheds some and puts forth others,
   so are the generations of flesh and blood:
   one dies and another is born.
19 Every work decays and ceases to exist,
   and the one who made it will pass away with it.

The search for Wisdom and her blessings

20 Happy is the person who meditates on wisdom
   and reasons intelligently,
21 who reflects in his heart on her ways
   and ponders her secrets,
22 pursuing her like a hunter,
   and lying in wait on her paths;
23 who peers through her windows
   and listens at her doors;
24 who camps near her house
   and fastens his tent peg to her walls;
25 who pitches his tent near her,
   and so occupies an excellent lodging place;
26 who places his children under her shelter,
   and lodges under her boughs;
27 who is sheltered by her from the heat,
   and dwells in the midst of her glory.

[Sirach 15]

1 Whoever fears the Lord will do this,
   and whoever holds to the law will obtain wisdom.
2 She will come to meet him like a mother,
   and like a young bride she will welcome him.
3 She will feed him with the bread of learning,
   and give him the water of wisdom to drink.
4 He will lean on her and not fall,
   and he will rely on her and not be put to shame.
5 She will exalt him above his neighbors,  
    and will open his mouth in the midst of the assembly.  
6 He will find gladness and a crown of rejoicing,  
    and will inherit an everlasting name.  
7 The foolish will not obtain her,  
    and sinners will not see her.  
8 She is far from arrogance,  
    and liars will never think of her.  
9 Praise is unseemly on the lips of a sinner,  
    for it has not been sent from the Lord.  
10 For in wisdom must praise be uttered,  
    and the Lord will make it prosper.

**Human responsibility**

11 Do not say, "It was the Lord's doing that I fell away";  
    for he does not do what he hates.  
12 Do not say, "It was he who led me astray";  
    for he has no need of the sinful.  
13 The Lord hates all abominations;  
    such things are not loved by those who fear him.  
14 It was he who created humankind in the beginning,  
    and he left them in the power of their own free choice.  
15 If you choose, you can keep the commandments,  
    and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice.  
16 He has placed before you fire and water;  
    stretch out your hand for whichever you choose.  
17 Before each person are life and death,  
    and whichever one chooses will be given.  
18 For great is the wisdom of the Lord;  
    he is mighty in power and sees everything;  
19 his eyes are on those who fear him,  
    and he knows every human action.  
20 He has not commanded anyone to be wicked,  
    and he has not given anyone permission to sin.
[Sirach 16]
The certainty of punishment for sin

1 Do not desire a multitude of worthless children, 
   and do not rejoice in ungodly offspring.
2 If they multiply, do not rejoice in them, 
   unless the fear of the Lord is in them.
3 Do not trust in their survival, or rely on their numbers; 
   for one can be better than a thousand, 
   and to die childless is better than to have ungodly children.
   For you will groan in untimely mourning, 
   and will know of their sudden end.
4 For through one intelligent person a city can be filled with people, 
   but through a clan of outlaws it becomes desolate.

5 Many such things my eye has seen, 
   and my ear has heard things more striking than these.
6 In an assembly of sinners a fire is kindled, 
   and in a disobedient nation wrath blazes up.
7 He did not forgive the ancient giants 
   who revolted in their might.
8 He did not spare the neighbors of Lot, 
   whom he loathed on account of their arrogance.
9 He showed no pity on the doomed nation, 
   on those dispossessed because of their sins
   (All these things he did to the hard-hearted nations,
   and by the multitude of his holy ones he was not appeased),
10 or on the six hundred thousand foot soldiers
   who assembled in their stubbornness. Chastising, showing mercy,
   striking, healing, the Lord persisted in mercy and discipline.
11 Even if there were only one stiff-necked person, 
   it would be a wonder if he remained unpunished.
   For mercy and wrath are with the Lord;
   he is mighty to forgive — but he also pours out wrath.
12 Great as is his mercy, so also is his chastisement;
   he judges a person according to his or her deeds.
13 The sinner will not escape with plunder, 
   and the patience of the godly will not be frustrated.
14 He makes room for every act of mercy; 
everyone receives in accordance with his or her deeds.
15 The Lord hardened Pharaoh so that he did not recognize him, 
in order that his works might be known under heaven.
16 His mercy is manifest to the whole of creation, and he divided 
his light and darkness with a plumb line.

17 Do not say, "I am hidden from the Lord, 
and who from on high has me in mind? 
Among so many people I am unknown, 
for what am I in a boundless creation?
18 Lo, heaven and the highest heaven, 
the abyss and the earth, tremble at his visitation! 
The whole world past and present is in his will.
19 The very mountains and the foundations of the earth 
quiver and quake when he looks upon them.
20 But no human mind can grasp this, 
and who can comprehend his ways?
21 Like a tempest that no one can see, 
so most of his works are concealed.
22 Who is to announce his acts of justice? 
Or who can await them? For his decree is far off."
(If I sin, no eye can see me, and if I am disloyal all 
in secret, who is to know?)
23 Such are the thoughts of one devoid of understanding; 
a senseless and misguided person thinks foolishly.

God's own wisdom in creation

24 Listen to me, my child, and acquire knowledge, 
and pay close attention to my words.
25 I will impart discipline precisely 
and declare knowledge accurately.
26 When the Lord created his works from the beginning, 
and, in making them, determined their boundaries,
27 he arranged his works in an eternal order,  
    and their dominion for all generations.  
    They neither hunger nor grow weary,  
    and they do not abandon their tasks.

28 They do not crowd one another,  
    and they never disobey his word.

29 Then the Lord looked upon the earth,  
    and filled it with his good things.

30 With all kinds of living beings he covered its surface,  
    and into it they must return.

[Sirach 17]

1 The Lord created human beings out of earth,  
    and makes them return to it again.

2 He gave them a fixed number of days,  
    but granted them authority over everything on the earth.

3 He endowed them with strength like his own,  
    and made them in his own image.

4 He put the fear of them in all living beings,  
    and gave them dominion over beasts and birds.

5 They obtained the use of the five faculties of the Lord;  
    as sixth he distributed to them the gift of the mind, and  
    as seventh, reason, the interpreter of one's faculties.

6 Discretion and tongue and eyes,  
    ears and a mind for thinking he gave them.

7 He filled them with knowledge and understanding,  
    and showed them good and evil.

8 He put the fear of him into their hearts  
    to show them the majesty of his works.

10 And they will praise his holy name,
9 to proclaim the grandeur of his works.

11 He bestowed knowledge upon them,  
    and allotted to them the law of life,  
    so that they may know that they who are alive now are mortal.

12 He established with them an eternal covenant,  
    and revealed to them his decrees.
13 Their eyes saw his glorious majesty,  
    and their ears heard the glory of his voice.  
14 He said to them, "Beware of all evil."  
    And he gave commandment to each of them concerning  
    the neighbor.

The divine judge

15 Their ways are always known to him;  
    they will not be hid from his eyes.  
16 Their ways from youth tend toward evil,  
    and they are unable to make for themselves hearts  
    of flesh in place of their stony hearts.

17 For in division of the nations of the whole earth,  
    he appointed a ruler for every nation,  
    but Israel is the LORD's own portion,  
18 whom being his firstborn, he brings up with discipline,  
    and allotting to him the light of his love,  
    he does not neglect them.

19 All their works are as clear as the sun before him,  
    and his eyes are ever upon their ways.  
20 Their iniquities are not hidden from him,  
    and all their sins are before the Lord.  
21 But the Lord, who is gracious and knows how they are formed,  
    has neither left them nor abandoned them, but has spared them.

22 One's almsgiving is like a signet ring with the Lord,  
    and he will keep a person's kindness like the apple of his eye,  
    apportioning repentance to his sons and daughters.  
23 Afterward he will rise up and repay them,  
    and he will bring their recompense on their heads.  
24 Yet to those who repent he grants a return,  
    and he encourages those who are losing hope.
A call to repentance

25 Turn back to the Lord and forsake your sins;
   pray in his presence and lessen your offense.
26 Return to the Most High and turn away from iniquity,
   and hate intensely what he abhors,
   for he will lead you out of darkness to the light of health.
27 Who will sing praises to the Most High in Hades
   in place of the living who give thanks?
28 From the dead, as from one who does not exist, thanksgiving
   has ceased; those who are alive and well sing the LORD's praises.
29 How great is the mercy of the Lord,
   and his forgiveness for those who return to him!
30 For not everything is within human capability,
   since human beings are not immortal.
31 What is brighter than the sun? Yet it can be eclipsed.
   So flesh and blood devise evil.
32 He marshals the host of the height of heaven;
   but all human beings are dust and ashes.

[Sirach 18]
In praise of God's majesty and mercy

1 He who lives forever created the whole universe;
2 the Lord alone is just, and there is no other beside him;
3 he steers the world with the span of his hand, and all things
   obey his will; for he is the king of all things by his power,
   separating among them the holy things from the profane.
4 To none has he given power to proclaim his works;
   and who can search out his mighty deeds?
5 Who can measure his majestic power?
   And who can fully recount his mercies?
6 It is not possible to diminish or increase them,
   nor is it possible to fathom the wonders of the Lord.
7 When human beings have finished, they are just beginning,
   and when they stop, they are still perplexed.
8 What are human beings, and of what use are they?  
What is good in them, and what is evil?
9 The number of days in their life is great if they reach one  
hundred years, but the death of each one is beyond  
the calculation of all.
10 Like a drop of water from the sea and a grain of sand,  
so are a few years among the days of eternity.
11 That is why the Lord is patient with them  
and pours out his mercy upon them.
12 He sees and recognizes that their end is miserable;  
therefore he grants them forgiveness all the more.
13 The compassion of human beings is for their neighbors,  
but the compassion of the Lord is for every living thing.
   He rebukes and trains and teaches them,  
   and turns them back, as a shepherd his flock.
14 He has compassion on those who accept his discipline  
and who are eager for his precepts.

Advice for living

15 My child, do not mix reproach with your good deeds,  
or spoil your gift by harsh words.
16 Does not the dew give relief from the scorching heat?  
   So a word is better than a gift.
17 Indeed, does not a word surpass a good gift?  
   Both are to be found in a gracious person.
18 A fool is ungracious and abusive,  
   and the gift of a grudging giver makes the eyes dim.

19 Before you speak, learn;  
   and before you fall ill, take care of your health.
20 Before judgment comes, examine yourself;  
   and at the time of scrutiny you will find forgiveness.
21 Before falling ill, humble yourself;  
   and when you have sinned, repent.
22 Let nothing hinder you from paying a vow promptly,  
   and do not wait until death to be released from it.
23 Before making a vow, prepare yourself; do not be like one who puts the Lord to the test.
24 Think of his wrath on the day of death, and of the moment of vengeance when he turns away his face.
25 In the time of plenty think of the time of hunger; in days of wealth think of poverty and need.
26 From morning to evening conditions change; all things move swiftly before the Lord.

27 One who is wise is cautious in everything; when sin is all around, one guards against wrongdoing.
28 Every intelligent person knows wisdom, and praises the one who finds her.
29 Those who are skilled in words become wise themselves, and pour forth apt proverbs.
Better is confidence in the one Lord than clinging with a dead heart to a dead one.

SELF-CONTROL

30 Do not follow your base desires, but restrain your appetites.
31 If you allow your soul to take pleasure in base desire, it will make you the laughingstock of your enemies.
32 Do not revel in great luxury, or you may become impoverished by its expense.
33 Do not become a beggar by feasting with borrowed money, when you have nothing in your purse, for you will be plotting against your own life.

[Sirach 19]

1 The one who does this [alcoholism] will not become rich; one who despises small things will fail little by little.
2 Wine and women lead intelligent men astray, and the man who consorts with prostitutes is reckless.
3 Decay and worms will take possession of him, and the reckless person will be snatched away.
4 One who trusts others too quickly has a shallow mind, and one who sins does wrong to himself.
5 One who rejoices in wickedness will be condemned, but one who withstands pleasures crowns his life.
6 One who controls the tongue will live without strife, and one who hates gossip has less evil.
7 Never repeat a conversation, and you will lose nothing at all.
8 With friend or foe do not report it, and unless it would be a sin for you, do not reveal it; for someone may have heard you and watched you, and in time will hate you.
9 Have you heard something? Let it die with you. Be brave, it will not make you burst!
10 Having heard something, the fool suffers birth pangs like a woman in labor with a child.
11 Like an arrow stuck in a person's thigh, so is gossip inside a fool.

13 Question a friend; perhaps he did not do it; or if he did, so that he may not do it again.
14 Question a neighbor; perhaps he did not say it; or if he said it, so that he may not repeat it.
15 Question a friend, for often it is slander; so do not believe everything you hear.
16 A person may make a slip without intending it. Who has not sinned with his tongue?
17 Question your neighbor before you threaten him; and let the law of the Most High take its course, and do not be angry.

18 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of acceptance, and wisdom obtains his love.
19 The knowledge of the LORD's commandments is life-giving discipline; and those who do what is pleasing to him enjoy the fruit of the tree of immortality.
Wisdom and cleverness contrasted

20 The whole of wisdom is fear of the Lord,
   and in all wisdom there is the fulfillment of the law,
   and the knowledge of his omnipotence.
21 When a slaves says to his master, "I will not act as you wish,"
   even if later he does it, he angers the one who supports him.
22 The knowledge of wickedness is not wisdom,
   nor is there prudence in the counsel of sinners.
23 There is a cleverness that is detestable,
   and there is a fool who merely lacks wisdom.
24 Better are the God-fearing who lack understanding
   than the highly intelligent who transgress the law.
25 There is a cleverness that is exact but unjust,
   and there are people who abuse favors to gain a verdict.
26 There is the villain bowed down in mourning,
   but inwardly he is full of deceit.
27 He hides his face and pretends not to hear,
   but when no one notices, he will take advantage of you.
28 Even if lack of strength keeps him from sinning,
   he will nevertheless do evil when he finds the opportunity.
29 A person is known by his appearance,
   and a sensible person is known when first met, face to face.
30 A person's attire and hearty laughter,
   and the way he walks, show what he is.

[Sirach 20]
Speech and silence

1 There is a rebuke that is untimely,
   and there is the person who is wise enough to keep silent.
2 How much better it is to rebuke than to fume!
3 And the one who admits his fault will be kept from failure.
4 Like a eunuch lusting to violate a girl
   is the person who does right under compulsion.
5 Some people keep silent and are thought to be wise,
   while others are detested for being talkative.
6 Some people keep silent because they have nothing to say, while others keep silent because they know when to speak.
7 The wise remain silent until the right moment, but a boasting fool misses the right moment.
8 Whoever talks too much is detested, and whoever pretends to authority is hated. How good it is to show repentance when you are reproved, for so you will escape deliberate sin!

Paradoxical appearances

9 There may be good fortune for a person in adversity, and a windfall may result in a loss.
10 There is the gift that profits you nothing, and the gift to be paid back double.
11 There are losses for the sake of glory, and there are some who have raised their heads from humble circumstances.
12 Some buy much for little, but pay for it seven times over.
13 The wise make themselves beloved by only few words, but the courtesies of fools are wasted.
14 A fool's gift will profit you nothing, so it is with the envious who give under compulsion, for he looks for recompense sevenfold.
15 He gives little and upbraids much; he opens his mouth like a town crier.
   Today he lends and tomorrow he asks it back; such a one is hateful to God and humans.
16 The fool says, "I have no friends, and I get no thanks for my good deeds. Those who eat my bread are evil-tongued."
17 How many will ridicule him, and how often, for he has not honestly received what he has, and what he does not have is unimportant to him!
Inappropriate speech

18 A slip on the pavement is better than a slip of the tongue; the downfall of the wicked will occur just as speedily.
19 A coarse person is like an inappropriate story, continually on the lips of the ignorant.
20 A proverb from a fool's lips will be rejected, for he does not tell it at the proper time.

Shameful circumstances

21 One may be prevented from sinning by poverty; so when he rests he feels no remorse.
22 One may lose his life through shame, or lose it because of human respect.
23 Another out of shame makes promises to a friend, and so makes an enemy for nothing.

24 A lie is an ugly blot on a person; it is continually on the lips of the ignorant.
25 A thief is preferable to a habitual liar, but the lot of both is ruin.
26 A liar's way leads to disgrace, and his shame is ever with him.

PROVERBIAL SAYINGS
Wise counsel

27 The wise person advances himself by his words, and one who is sensible pleases the great.
28 Those who cultivate the soil heap up their harvest, and those who please the great atone for injustice.
29 Favors and gifts blind the eyes of the wise; like a muzzle on the mouth they stop reproofs.
30 Hidden wisdom and unseen treasure, of what value is either?
31 Better are those who hide their folly than those who hide their wisdom.
32 Unwearied endurance in seeking the Lord is better than a masterless charioteer of one’s own life.

[Sirach 21]
Warnings against sin

1 Have you sinned, my child? Do so no more, but ask forgiveness for your past sins.
2 Flee from sin as from a snake; for if you approach sin, it will bite you. Its teeth are lion's teeth, and can destroy human lives.
3 All lawlessness is like a two-edged sword; there is no healing for the wound it inflicts.

4 Panic and insolence will waste away riches; thus the house of the proud will be laid waste.
5 The prayer of the poor goes from their lips to the ears of God, and his judgment comes speedily.
6 Those who hate reproof walk in the sinner's steps, but those who fear the Lord repent in their heart.
7 The mighty in speech are widely known; when they slip, the sensible person knows it.

8 Whoever builds his house with other people's money is like one who gathers stones for his burial mound.
9 An assembly of the wicked is like a bundle of tow, and their end is a blazing fire.
10 The way of sinners is paved with smooth stones, but at its end is the pit of Hades.

A series of contrasts between the wise and fools

11 Whoever keeps the law controls his thoughts, and the fulfillment of the fear of the Lord is wisdom.
12 The one who is not clever cannot be taught, but there is a cleverness that increases bitterness.
13 The knowledge of the wise will increase like a flood,
   and their counsel like a life-giving spring.
14 The mind of a fool is like a broken jar;
   it can hold no knowledge.

15 When an intelligent person hears a wise saying,
    he praises it and adds to it;
    when a fool hears it, he laughs at it
    and throws it behind his back.
16 A fool's chatter is like a burden on a journey,
    but delight is found in the speech of the intelligent.
17 The utterance of a sensible person is sought in the assembly,
    and they ponder his words in their minds.

18 Like a house in ruins is wisdom to a fool,
    and to the ignorant, knowledge is talk that has no meaning.
19 To a senseless person education is fetters on his feet,
    and like manacles on his right hand.
20 A fool raises his voice when he laughs,
    but the wise smile quietly.
21 To the sensible person education is like a golden ornament,
    and like a bracelet on the right arm.
22 The foot of a fool rushes into a house,
    but an experienced person waits respectfully outside.
23 A boor peers into the house from the door,
    but a cultivated person remains outside.
24 It is ill-mannered for a person to listen at a door;
    the discreet would be grieved by the disgrace.

25 The lips of babblers speak of what is not their concern,
    but the words of the prudent are weighed in the balance.
26 The mind of fools is in their mouth,
    but the mouth of the wise is in their mind.
27 When an ungodly person curses an adversary,
    he curses himself.
28 A whisperer degrades himself
    and is hated in his neighborhood.
[Sirach 22]
On laziness

1 The idler is like a filthy stone,
   and every one hisses at his disgrace.
2 The idler is like the filth of dunghills;
   anyone that picks it up will shake it off his hand.

On children

3 It is a disgrace to be the father of an undisciplined son,
   and the birth of a daughter is a loss.
4 A sensible daughter obtains a husband of her own,
   but one who acts shamefully is a grief to her father.
5 An impudent daughter disgraces father and husband,
   and is despised by both.
6 Like music in time of mourning is ill-timed conversation,
   but a thrashing and discipline are at all times wisdom.

7 Children who are brought up in a good life, conceal the
   lowly birth of their parents.
8 Children who are disdainfully and boorishly haughty stain
   the nobility of their kindred.

On fools

9 Whoever teaches a fool is like one who glues potsherds together,
   or who rouses a sleeper from deep slumber.
10 Whoever tells a story to a fool tells it to a drowsy man;
    and at the end he will say, "What is it?"
11 Weep for the dead, for he has left the light behind;
    and weep for the fool, for he has left intelligence behind.
    Weep less bitterly for the dead, for he is at rest;
    but the life of the fool is worse than death.
12 Mourning for the dead lasts seven days,
    but for the foolish or the ungodly it lasts all the days of
    their lives.
13 Do not talk much with a senseless person
   or visit an unintelligent person.
   For being without sense he will despise everything about you.
   Stay clear of him, or you may have trouble,
   and be spattered when he shakes himself off.
   Avoid him and you will find rest,
   and you will never be wearied by his lack of sense.
14 What is heavier than lead?
   And what is its name except "Fool"?
15 Sand, salt, and a piece of iron
   are easier to bear than a stupid person.

16 A wooden beam firmly bonded into a building
   is not loosened by an earthquake;
   so the mind firmly resolved after due reflection
   will not be afraid in a crisis.
17 A mind settled on an intelligent thought
   is like stucco decoration that makes a wall smooth.
18 Fences set on a high place
   will not stand firm against the wind;
   so a timid mind with a fool's resolve
   will not stand firm against any fear.

Preserving friendship

19 One who pricks the eye brings tears,
   and one who pricks the heart makes clear its feelings.
20 One who throws a stone at birds scares them away,
   and one who reviles a friend destroys a friendship.
21 Even if you draw your sword against a friend,
   do not despair, for there is a way back.
22 If you open your mouth against your friend,
   do not worry, for reconciliation is possible.
   But as for reviling, arrogance, disclosure of secrets,
   or a treacherous blow — in these cases any friend
   will take to flight.
23 Gain the trust of your neighbor in his poverty,  
so that you may rejoice with him in his prosperity.  
Stand by him in time of distress,  
so that you may share with him in his inheritance.  
For one should not always despise restricted circumstances,  
or admire a rich person who is stupid.
24 The vapor and smoke of the furnace precede the fire;  
so insults precede bloodshed.
25 I am not ashamed to shelter a friend,  
and I will not hide from him.
26 But if harm should come to me because of him,  
whoever hears of it will beware of him.

A prayer for self-control

27 Who will set a guard over my mouth,  
and an effective seal upon my lips,  
so that I may not fall because of them,  
and my tongue may not destroy me?

[Sirach 23]

1 O Lord, Father and Master of my life,  
do not abandon me to their designs,  
and do not let me fall because of them!
2 Who will set whips over my thoughts,  
and the discipline of wisdom over my mind,  
so as not to spare me in my errors,  
and not overlook my sins?
3 Otherwise my mistakes may be multiplied,  
and my sins may abound,  
and I may fall before my adversaries,  
and my enemy may rejoice over me.  
From them the hope of your mercy is remote.
4 O Lord, Father and God of my life,  
do not give me haughty eyes,  
5 and remove evil desire from me.
6 Let neither gluttony nor lust overcome me,
    and do not give me over to shameless passion.

DISCIPLINE OF THE TONGUE
Sinful speech

7 Listen, my children, to instruction concerning the mouth;
    the one who observes it will never be caught.
8 Sinners are overtaken through their lips;
    by them the reviler and the arrogant are tripped up.
9 Do not accustom your mouth to oaths,
    nor habitually utter the name of the Holy One;
10 for as a servant who is constantly under scrutiny
    will not lack bruises,
    so also the person who always swears and utters the Name
    will never be cleansed from sin.
11 The one who swears many oaths is full of iniquity,
    and the scourge will not leave his house.
    If he swears in error, his sin remains on him,
    and if he disregards it, he sins doubly;
    if he swears a false oath, he will not be justified,
    for his house will be filled with calamities.

12 There is a manner of speaking comparable to death;
    may it never be found in the inheritance of Jacob!
    Such conduct will be far from the godly,
    and they will not wallow in sins.
13 Do not accustom your mouth to coarse, foul language,
    for it involves sinful speech.
14 Remember your father and mother
    when you sit among the great,
    or you may forget yourself in their presence,
    and behave like a fool through bad habit;
    then you will wish that you had never been born,
    and you will curse the day of your birth.
15 Those who are accustomed to using abusive language
    will never become disciplined as long as they live.
Sexual misconduct

16 Two kinds of individuals multiply sins, and a third incurs wrath. Hot passion that blazes like a fire will not be quenched until it burns itself out; one who commits fornication with his near of kin will never cease until the fire burns him up.

17 To a fornicator all bread is sweet; he will never weary until he dies.

18 The one who sins against his marriage bed says to himself, "Who can see me? Darkness surrounds me, the walls hide me, and no one sees me. Why should I worry? The Most High will not remember sins."

19 His fear is confined to human eyes and he does not realize that the eyes of the Lord are ten thousand times brighter than the sun; they look upon every aspect of human behavior and see into hidden corners.

20 Before the universe was created, it was known to him, and so it is since its completion.

21 This man will be punished in the streets of the city, and where he least suspects it, he will be seized.

22 So it is with a woman who leaves her husband and presents him with an heir by another man.

23 For first of all, she has disobeyed the law of the Most High; second, she has committed an offense against her husband; and third, through her fornication she has committed adultery and brought forth children by another man.

24 She herself will be brought before the assembly, and her punishment will extend to her children.

25 Her children will not take root, and her branches will not bear fruit.

26 She will leave behind an accursed memory and her disgrace will never be blotted out.
27 Those who survive her will recognize
    that nothing is better than the fear of the Lord,
    and nothing sweeter than to heed the commandments of the Lord.
28 It is a great honor to follow God,
    and to be received by him is long life.

THE PRAISE OF WISDOM
[Sirach 24]
Praise of Wisdom

1 Wisdom praises herself,
    and tells of her glory in the midst of her people.
2 In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth,
    and in the presence of his hosts she tells of her glory:
3 "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,
    and covered the earth like a mist.
4 I dwelt in the highest heavens,
    and my throne was in a pillar of cloud.
5 Alone I compassed the vault of heaven
    and traversed the depths of the abyss.
6 Over waves of the sea, over all the earth,
    and over every people and nation I have held sway.
7 Among all these I sought a resting place;
    in whose territory should I abide?
8 "Then the Creator of all things gave me a command,
    and my Creator chose the place for my tent.
    He said, 'Make your dwelling in Jacob,
    and in Israel receive your inheritance.'
9 Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me,
    and for all the ages I shall not cease to be.
10 In the holy tent I ministered before him,
    and so I was established in Zion.
11 Thus in the beloved city he gave me a resting place,
    and in Jerusalem was my domain.
12 I took root in an honored people,
    in the portion of the Lord, his heritage.
13 "I grew tall like a cedar in Lebanon,
    and like a cypress on the heights of Hermon.
14 I grew tall like a palm tree in En-gedi,
    and like rosebushes in Jericho;
    like a fair olive tree in the field,
    and like a plane tree beside water I grew tall.
15 Like cassia and camel's thorn I gave forth perfume,
    and like choice myrrh I spread my fragrance,
    like galbanum, onycha, and stacte,
    and like the odor of incense in the tent.
16 Like a terebinth I spread out my branches,
    and my branches are glorious and graceful.
17 Like the vine I bud forth delights,
    and my blossoms become glorious and abundant fruit.
18 I am the mother of beautiful love, of fear, of knowledge,
    and of holy hope; being eternal, I am given to all my children,
    to those who are named by him.
19 "Come to me, you who desire me,
    and eat your fill of my fruits.
20 For the memory of me is sweeter than honey,
    and the possession of me sweeter than the honeycomb.
21 Those who eat of me will hunger for more,
    and those who drink of me will thirst for more.
22 Whoever obeys me will not be put to shame,
    and those who work with me will not sin."

23 All this is the book of the covenant of the Most High God,
    the law that Moses commanded us
    as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob.
24 "Do not cease to be strong in the Lord, cling to him so that he
    may strengthen you; the Lord Almighty alone is God, and besides
    him there is no savior."
25 It overflows, like the Pishon, with wisdom,
    and like the Tigris at the time of the first fruits.
26 It runs over, like the Euphrates, with understanding,
    and like the Jordan at harvest time.
27 It pours forth instruction like the Nile,
    like the Gihon at the time of vintage.
28 The first man did not know wisdom fully, 
    nor will the last one fathom her.
29 For her thoughts are more abundant than the sea, 
    and her counsel deeper than the great abyss.

30 As for me, I was like a canal from a river, 
    like a water channel into a garden.
31 I said, "I will water my garden 
    and drench my flower-beds."
    And lo, my canal became a river, 
    and my river a sea.
32 I will again make instruction shine forth like the dawn, 
    and I will make it clear from far away.
33 I will again pour out teaching like prophecy, 
    and leave it to all future generations.
34 Observe that I have not labored for myself alone, 
    but for all who seek wisdom.

[Sirach 25]
Numerical sayings

1 I take pleasure in three things, 
    and they are beautiful in the sight of God and of mortals: 
    agreement among brothers and sisters, friendship 
    among neighbors, and a wife and a husband who 
    live in harmony.
2 I hate three kinds of people, 
    and I loathe their manner of life: 
    a pauper who boasts, a rich person who lies, 
    and an old fool who commits adultery.

Wisdom and maturity

3 If you gathered nothing in your youth, 
    how can you find anything in your old age?
4 How attractive is sound judgment in the gray-haired, 
    and for the aged to possess good counsel!
5 How attractive is wisdom in the aged,
   and understanding and counsel in the venerable!
6 Rich experience is the crown of the aged,
   and their boast is the fear of the Lord.

A numerical saying of ten blessings

7 I can think of nine whom I would call blessed,
   and a tenth my tongue proclaims:
    a man who can rejoice in his children;
     a man who lives to see the downfall of his foes.
8 Happy the man who lives with a sensible wife,
    and the one who does not plow with ox and ass together.
   Happy is the one who does not sin with the tongue,
    and the one who has not served an inferior.
9 Happy is the one who finds a friend,
    and the one who speaks to attentive listeners.
10 How great is the one who finds wisdom!
    But none is superior to the one who fears the Lord.
11 Fear of the Lord surpasses everything;
    to whom can we compare the one who has it?
12 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of love for him,
    and faith is the beginning of clinging to him.

Woeful women and bad wives

13 Any wound, but not a wound of the heart!
   Any wickedness, but not the wickedness of a woman!
14 Any suffering, but not suffering from those who hate!
   And any vengeance, but not the vengeance of enemies!
15 There is no venom worse than a snake's venom,
   and no anger worse than a woman's wrath.

16 I would rather live with a lion and a dragon
    than live with an evil woman.
17 A woman's wickedness changes her appearance,
    and darkens her face like that of a bear.
18 Her husband sits among the neighbors,  
and he cannot help sighing bitterly.  
19 Any iniquity is small compared to a woman's iniquity;  
may a sinner's lot befall her!  
20 A sandy ascent for the feet of the aged —  
such is a garrulous wife to a quiet husband.  
21 Do not be ensnared by a woman's beauty,  
and do not desire a woman for her possessions.  
22 There is wrath and impudence and great disgrace  
when a wife supports her husband.  
23 Dejected mind, gloomy face,  
and wounded heart come from an evil wife.  
Drooping hands and weak knees  
come from the wife who does not make her husband happy.  
24 From a woman sin had its beginning,  
and because of her we all die.  
25 Allow no outlet to water,  
and no boldness of speech to an evil wife.  
26 If she does not go as you direct,  
separate her from yourself.

[Sirach 26]  
The good wife

1 Happy is the husband of a good wife;  
the number of his days will be doubled.  
2 A loyal wife brings joy to her husband,  
and he will complete his years in peace.  
3 A good wife is a great blessing;  
she will be granted among the blessings of the man who  
fears the Lord.  
4 Whether rich or poor, his heart is content,  
and at all times his face is cheerful.
More objectionable women

5 Of three things my heart is frightened, 
   and of a fourth I am in great fear: 
   Slander in the city, the gathering of a mob, 
   and false accusation — all these are worse than death. 
6 But it is heartache and sorrow when a wife is jealous of a rival, 
   and a tongue-lashing makes it known to all. 
7 A bad wife is a chafing yoke; 
   taking hold of her is like grasping a scorpion. 
8 A drunken wife arouses great anger; 
   she cannot hide her shame. 
9 The haughty stare betrays an unchaste wife; 
   her eyelids give her away. 

10 Keep strict watch over a headstrong daughter, 
    or else, when she finds liberty, she will make use of it. 
11 Be on guard against her impudent eye, 
    and do not be surprised if she sins against you. 
12 As a thirsty traveler opens his mouth 
    and drinks from any water near him, 
    so she will sit in front of every tent peg 
    and open her quiver to the arrow. 

Praise of the good wife

13 A wife's charm delights her husband, 
    and her skill puts flesh on his bones. 
14 A silent wife is a gift from the Lord, 
    and nothing is so precious as her self-discipline. 
15 A modest wife adds charm to charm, 
    and no scales can weigh the value of her chastity. 
16 Like the sun rising in the heights of the Lord, 
    so is the beauty of a good wife in her well-ordered home. 
17 Like the shining lamp on the holy lampstand, 
    so is a beautiful face on a stately figure. 
18 Like golden pillars on silver bases, 
    so are shapely legs and steadfast feet.
Other ancient authorities add verses 19–27: Further teaching concerning women

19 My child, keep sound the bloom of your youth, and do not give your strength to strangers.
20 Seek a fertile field within the whole plain, and sow it with your own seed, trusting in your fine stock.
21 So your offspring will prosper, and, having confidence in their good descent, will grow great.
22 A prostitute is regarded as spittle, and a married woman as a tower of death to her lovers.
23 A godless wife is given as a portion to a lawless man, but a pious wife is given to the man who fears the Lord.
24 A shameless woman constantly acts disgracefully, but a modest daughter will even be embarrassed before her husband.
25 A headstrong wife is regarded as a dog, but one who has a sense of shame will fear the Lord.
26 A wife honoring her husband will seem wise to all, but if she dishonors him in her pride she will be known to all as ungodly.
   Happy is the husband of a good wife; for the number of his years will be doubled.
27 A loud-voiced and garrulous wife is like a trumpet sounding the charge, and every person like this lives in the anarchy of war.

Tests of character

28 At two things my heart is grieved, and because of a third anger comes over me:
   a warrior in want through poverty,
   intelligent men who are treated contemptuously,
   and a man who turns back from righteousness to sin — the Lord will prepare him for the sword!

29 A merchant can hardly keep from wrongdoing, nor is a tradesman innocent of sin.
[Sirach 27]

1 Many have committed sin for gain,
   and those who seek to get rich will avert their eyes.
2 As a stake is driven firmly into a fissure between stones,
   so sin is wedged in between selling and buying.
3 If a person is not steadfast in the fear of the Lord,
   his house will be quickly overthrown.

4 When a sieve is shaken, the refuse appears;
   so do a person's faults when he speaks.
5 The kiln tests the potter's vessels;
   so the test of a person is in his conversation.
6 Its fruit discloses the cultivation of a tree;
   so a person's speech discloses the cultivation of his mind.
7 Do not praise anyone before he speaks,
   for this is the way people are tested.

8 If you pursue justice, you will attain it
   and wear it like a glorious robe.
9 Birds roost with their own kind,
   so honesty comes home to those who practice it.
10 A lion lies in wait for prey;
   so does sin for evildoers.

11 The conversation of the godly is always wise,
   but the fool changes like the moon.
12 Among stupid people limit your time,
   but among thoughtful people linger on.
13 The talk of fools is offensive,
   and their laughter is wantonly sinful.
14 Their cursing and swearing make one's hair stand on end,
   and their quarrels make others stop their ears.
15 The strife of the proud leads to bloodshed,
   and their abuse is grievous to hear.
Damaged relationships

16 Whoever betrays secrets destroys confidence, and will never find a congenial friend.
17 Love your friend and keep faith with him; but if you betray his secrets, do not follow after him.
18 For as a person destroys his enemy, so you have destroyed the friendship of your neighbor.
19 And as you allow a bird to escape from your hand, so you have let your neighbor go, and will not catch him again.
20 Do not go after him, for he is too far off, and has escaped like a gazelle from a snare.
21 For a wound may be bandaged, and there is reconciliation after abuse, but whoever has betrayed secrets is without hope.

22 Whoever winks the eye plots mischief, and those who know him will keep their distance.
23 In your presence his mouth is all sweetness, and he admires your words; but later he will twist his speech and with your own words he will trip you up.
24 I have hated many things, but him above all; even the Lord hates him.
25 Whoever throws a stone straight up throws it on his own head, and a treacherous blow opens up many wounds.
26 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it, and whoever sets a snare will be caught in it.
27 If a person does evil, it will roll back upon him, and he will not know where it came from.
28 Mockery and abuse issue from the proud, but vengeance lies in wait for them like a lion.
29 Those who rejoice in the fall of the godly will be caught in a snare, and pain will consume them before their death.

30 Anger and wrath, these also are abominations, yet a sinner holds on to them.
[Sirach 28]

1 The vengeful will face the LORD's vengeance,
   for he keeps a strict account of their sins.
2 Forgive your neighbor the wrong he has done,
   and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray.
3 Does anyone harbor anger against another,
   and expect healing from the Lord?
4 If one has no mercy toward another like himself,
   can he then seek pardon for his own sins?
5 If a mere mortal harbors wrath,
   who will make an atoning sacrifice for his sins?
6 Remember the end of your life, and set enmity aside;
   remember corruption and death, and be true to
   the commandments.
7 Remember the commandments, and do not be angry with
   your neighbor; remember the covenant of the Most High,
   and overlook faults.

8 Refrain from strife, and your sins will be fewer;
   for the hot-tempered kindle strife,
9 and the sinner disrupts friendships
   and sows discord among those who are at peace.
10 In proportion to the fuel, so will the fire burn,
   and in proportion to the obstinacy, so will strife increase;
   in proportion to a person's strength will be his anger,
   and in proportion to his wealth he will increase his wrath.
11 A hasty quarrel kindles a fire,
   and a hasty dispute sheds blood.
12 If you blow on a spark, it will glow;
   if you spit on it, it will be put out;
   yet both come out of your mouth.

13 Curse the gossips and the double-tongued,
   for they destroy the peace of many.
14 Slander has shaken many,
   and scattered them from nation to nation;
   it has destroyed strong cities,
   and overturned the houses of the great.
15 Slander has driven virtuous women from their homes,
   and deprived them of the fruit of their toil.
16 Those who pay heed to slander will not find rest,
   nor will they settle down in peace.
17 The blow of a whip raises a welt,
   but a blow of the tongue crushes the bones.
18 Many have fallen by the edge of the sword,
   but not as many as have fallen because of the tongue.
19 Happy is the one who is protected from it,
   who has not been exposed to its anger,
   who has not borne its yoke,
   and has not been bound with its fetters.
20 For its yoke is a yoke of iron,
   and its fetters are fetters of bronze;
21 its death is an evil death,
   and Hades is preferable to it.
22 It has no power over the godly;
   they will not be burned in its flame.
23 Those who forsake the Lord will fall into its power;
   it will burn among them and will not be put out.
   It will be sent out against them like a lion;
   like a leopard it will mangle them.
24a As you fence in your property with thorns,
25b so make a door and a bolt for your mouth.
24b As you lock up your silver and gold,
25a so make balances and scales for your words.
26 Take care not to err with your tongue,
   and fall victim to one lying in wait.
Loans, alms, surety

1 The merciful lend to their neighbors; 
   by holding out a helping hand they keep the commandments.
2 Lend to your neighbor in his time of need; 
   repay your neighbor when a loan falls due.
3 Keep your promise and be honest with him, 
   and on every occasion you will find what you need.
4 Many regard a loan as a windfall, 
   and cause trouble to those who help them.
5 One kisses another's hands until he gets a loan, 
   and is deferential in speaking of his neighbor's money; 
   but at the time for repayment he delays, 
   and pays back with empty promises, 
   and finds fault with the time.
6 If he can pay, his creditor will hardly get back half, 
   and will regard that as a windfall. 
   If he cannot pay, the borrower has robbed the other of his 
   money, and he has needlessly made him an enemy; 
   he will repay him with curses and reproaches, 
   and instead of glory will repay him with dishonor.
7 Many refuse to lend, not because of meanness, 
   but from fear of being defrauded needlessly.

8 Nevertheless, be patient with someone in humble circumstances, 
   and do not keep him waiting for your alms.
9 Help the poor for the commandment's sake, 
   and in their need do not send them away empty-handed.
10 Lose your silver for the sake of a brother or a friend, 
   and do not let it rust under a stone and be lost.
11 Lay up your treasure according to the commandments of the 
   Most High, and it will profit you more than gold.
12 Store up almsgiving in your treasury, 
   and it will rescue you from every disaster; 
13 better than a stout shield and a sturdy spear, 
   it will fight for you against the enemy.
14 A good person will be surety for his neighbor,  
     but the one who has lost all sense of shame will fail him.  
15 Do not forget the kindness of your guarantor,  
     for he has given his life for you.  
16 A sinner wastes the property of his guarantor,  
17 and the ungrateful person abandons his rescuer.  
18 Being surety has ruined many who were prosperous,  
     and has tossed them about like waves of the sea;  
     it has driven the influential into exile,  
     and they have wandered among foreign nations.  
19 The sinner comes to grief through surety;  
     his pursuit of gain involves him in lawsuits.  
20 Assist your neighbor to the best of your ability,  
     but be careful not to fall yourself.

Frugality

21 The necessities of life are water, bread, and clothing,  
     and also a house to assure privacy.  
22 Better is the life of the poor under their own crude roof  
     than sumptuous food in the house of others.  
23 Be content with little or much,  
     and you will hear no reproach for being a guest.  
24 It is a miserable life to go from house to house;  
     as a guest you should not open your mouth;  
25 you will play the host and provide drink without being thanked,  
     and besides this you will hear rude words like these:  
26 "Come here, stranger, prepare the table;  
     let me eat what you have there."
27 "Be off, stranger, for an honored guest is here;  
     my brother has come for a visit, and I need the guest-room."  
28 It is hard for a sensible person to bear  
     scolding about lodging and the insults of the moneylender.
CONCERNING CHILDREN
[Sirach 30]
Training of children

1 He who loves his son will whip him often, so that he may rejoice at the way he turns out.
2 He who disciplines his son will profit by him, and will boast of him among acquaintances.
3 He who teaches his son will make his enemies envious, and will glory in him among his friends.
4 When the father dies he will not seem to be dead, for he has left behind him one like himself,
5 whom in his life he looked upon with joy and at death, without grief.
6 He has left behind him an avenger against his enemies, and one to repay the kindness of his friends.

7 Whoever spoils his son will bind up his wounds, and will suffer heartache at every cry.
8 An unbroken horse turns out stubborn, and an unchecked son turns out headstrong.
9 Pamper a child, and he will terrorize you; play with him, and he will grieve you.
10 Do not laugh with him, or you will have sorrow with him, and in the end you will gnash your teeth.
11 Give him no freedom in his youth, and do not ignore his errors.
12 Bow down his neck in his youth, and beat his sides while he is young, or else he will become stubborn and disobey you, and you will have sorrow of soul from him.
13 Discipline your son and make his yoke heavy, so that you may not be offended by his shamelessness.

On health and enjoyment of life

14 Better off poor, healthy, and fit than rich and afflicted in body.
15 Health and fitness are better than any gold, and a robust body than countless riches.
16 There is no wealth better than health of body, and no gladness above joy of heart.
17 Death is better than a life of misery, and eternal sleep than chronic sickness.

CONCERNING FOODS

18 Good things poured out upon a mouth that is closed are like offerings of food placed upon a grave.
19 Of what use to an idol is a sacrifice? For it can neither eat nor smell. So is the one punished by the Lord; he sees with his eyes and groans as a eunuch groans when embracing a girl. So is the person who does right under compulsion.
20 Do not give yourself over to sorrow, and do not distress yourself deliberately.
21 A joyful heart is life itself, and rejoicing lengthens one's life span.
22 Indulge yourself and take comfort, and remove sorrow far from you, for sorrow has destroyed many, and no advantage ever comes from it.
23 Jealousy and anger shorten life, and anxiety brings on premature old age.
24 Those who are cheerful and merry at table will benefit from their food.

[Sirach 31]
On wealth

1 Wakefulness over wealth wastes away one's flesh, and anxiety about it drives away sleep.
2 Wakeful anxiety prevents slumber, and a severe illness carries off sleep.
3 The rich person toils to amass a fortune,
    and when he rests he fills himself with his dainties.
4 The poor person toils to make a meager living,
    and if ever he rests he becomes needy.

5 One who loves gold will not be justified;
    one who pursues money will be led astray by it.
6 Many have come to ruin because of gold,
    and their destruction has met them face to face.
7 It is a stumbling block to those who are avid for it,
    and every fool will be taken captive by it.
8 Blessed is the rich person who is found blameless,
    and who does not go after gold.
9 Who is he, that we may praise him?
    For he has done wonders among his people.
10 Who has been tested by it and been found perfect?
    Let it be for him a ground for boasting.
    Who has had the power to transgress and did not transgress,
    and to do evil and did not do it?
11 His prosperity will be established,
    and the assembly will proclaim his acts of charity.

Temperance in eating and drinking

12 Are you seated at the table of the great?
    Do not be greedy at it,
    and do not say, "How much food there is here!"
13 Remember that a greedy eye is a bad thing.
    What has been created more greedy than the eye?
    Therefore it sheds tears for any reason.
14 Do not reach out your hand for everything you see,
    and do not crowd your neighbor at the dish.
15 Judge your neighbor's feelings by your own,
    and in every matter be thoughtful.
16 Eat what is set before you like a well brought-up person,
    and do not chew greedily, or you will give offense.
17 Be the first to stop, as befits good manners,
    and do not be insatiable, or you will give offense.
18 If you are seated among many persons,
do not help yourself before they do.

19 How ample a little is for a well-disciplined person!
He does not breathe heavily when in bed.
20 Healthy sleep depends on moderate eating;
he rises early, and feels fit.
The distress of sleeplessness and of nausea
and colic are with the glutton.
21 If you are overstuffed with food,
get up to vomit, and you will have relief.
22 Listen to me, my child, and do not disregard me,
and in the end you will appreciate my words.
In everything you do be moderate,
and no sickness will overtake you.
23 People bless the one who is liberal with food,
and their testimony to his generosity is trustworthy.
24 The city complains of the one who is stingy with food,
and their testimony to his stinginess is accurate.

25 Do not try to prove your strength by wine-drinking,
for wine has destroyed many.
26 As the furnace tests the work of the smith,
so wine tests hearts when the insolent quarrel.
27 Wine is very life to human beings
if taken in moderation.
What is life to one who is without wine?
It has been created to make people happy.
28 Wine drunk at the proper time and in moderation
is rejoicing of heart and gladness of soul.
29 Wine drunk to excess leads to bitterness of spirit,
to quarrels and stumbling.
30 Drunkenness increases the anger of a fool to his own hurt,
reducing his strength and adding wounds.
31 Do not reprove your neighbor at a banquet of wine,
and do not despise him in his merrymaking;
speak no word of reproach to him,
and do not distress him by making demands of him.
[Sirach 32]

1 If they make you master of the feast, do not exalt yourself;
   be among them as one of their number.
   Take care of them first and then sit down;
2 when you have fulfilled all your duties, take your place,
   so that you may be merry along with them
   and receive a wreath for your excellent leadership.

3 Speak, you who are older, for it is your right,
   but with accurate knowledge, and do not interrupt the music.
4 Where there is entertainment, do not pour out talk;
   do not display your cleverness at the wrong time.
5 A ruby seal in a setting of gold
   is a concert of music at a banquet of wine.
6 A seal of emerald in a rich setting of gold
   is the melody of music with good wine.
7 Speak, you who are young, if you are obliged to,
   but no more than twice, and only if asked.
8 Be brief; say much in few words;
   be as one who knows and can still hold his tongue.
9 Among the great do not act as their equal;
   and when another is speaking, do not babble.

10 Lightning travels ahead of the thunder,
    and approval goes before one who is modest.
11 Leave in good time and do not be the last;
    go home quickly and do not linger.
12 Amuse yourself there to your heart's content,
    but do not sin through proud speech.
13 But above all bless your Maker,
    who fills you with his good gifts.

The God-fearing person contrasted with the sinner

14 The one who seeks God will accept his discipline,
    and those who rise early to seek him will find favor.
15 The one who seeks the law will be filled with it,
   but the hypocrite will stumble at it.
16 Those who fear the Lord will form true judgments,
   and they will kindle righteous deeds like a light.
17 The sinner will shun reproof,
   and will find a decision according to his liking.
18 A sensible person will not overlook a thoughtful suggestion;
   an insolent and proud person will not be deterred by fear.
19 Do nothing without deliberation,
   but when you have acted, do not regret it.
20 Do not go on a path full of hazards,
   and do not stumble at an obstacle twice.
21 Do not be overconfident on a smooth road,
22 and give good heed to your paths.
23 Guard yourself in every act,
   for this is the keeping of the commandments.

24 The one who keeps the law preserves himself,
   and the one who trusts the Lord will not suffer loss.

[Sirach 33]

1 No evil will befall the one who fears the Lord,
   but in trials such a one will be rescued again and again.
2 The wise will not hate the law,
   but the one who is hypocritical about it is like a boat in a storm.
3 The sensible person will trust in the law;
   for such a one the law is as dependable as a divine oracle.

4 Prepare what to say, and then you will be listened to;
   draw upon your training, and give your answer.
5 The heart of a fool is like a cart wheel,
   and his thoughts like a turning axle.
6 A mocking friend is like a stallion
   that neighs no matter who the rider is.
Divinely ordained opposites in creation

7 Why is one day more important than another, when all the daylight in the year is from the sun?
8 By the LORD's wisdom they were distinguished, and he appointed the different seasons and festivals.
9 Some days he exalted and hallowed, and some he made ordinary days.
10 All human beings come from the ground, and humankind was created out of the dust.
11 In the fullness of his knowledge the Lord distinguished them and appointed their different ways.
12 Some he blessed and exalted, and some he made holy and brought near to himself; but some he cursed and brought low, and turned them out of their place.
13 Like clay in the hand of the potter, to be molded as he pleases, so all are in the hand of their Maker, to be given whatever he decides.
14 Good is the opposite of evil, and life the opposite of death; so the sinner is the opposite of the godly.
15 Look at all the works of the Most High; they come in pairs, one the opposite of the other.

The author's qualifications

16 Now I was the last to keep vigil; I was like a gleaner following the grape-pickers;
17 by the blessing of the Lord I arrived first, and like a grape-picker I filled my wine press.
18 Consider that I have not labored for myself alone, but for all who seek instruction.
19 Hear me, you who are great among the people, and you leaders of the congregation, pay heed!
On property and slaves

20 To son or wife, to brother or friend, 
do not give power over yourself, as long as you live; 
and do not give your property to another, 
in case you change your mind and must ask for it.

21 While you are still alive and have breath in you, 
do not let anyone take your place.

22 For it is better that your children should ask from you 
than that you should look to the hand of your children.

23 Excel in all that you do; 
bring no stain upon your honor.

24 At the time when you end the days of your life, 
in the hour of death, distribute your inheritance.

25 Fodder and a stick and burdens for a donkey; 
bread and discipline and work for a slave.

26 Set your slave to work, and you will find rest; 
leave his hands idle, and he will seek liberty.

27 Yoke and thong will bow the neck, 
and for a wicked slave there are racks and tortures.

28 Put him to work, in order that he may not be idle, 
for idleness teaches much evil.

29 Set him to work, as is fitting for him, 
and if he does not obey, make his fetters heavy. 

Do not be overbearing toward anyone, 
and do nothing unjust.

31 If you have but one slave, treat him like yourself, 
because you have bought him with blood.

If you have but one slave, treat him like a brother, 
for you will need him as you need your life.

32 If you ill-treat him, and he leaves you and runs away, 
33 which way will you go to seek him?
[Sirach 34]
The vanity of dreams and omens

1 The senseless have vain and false hopes, and dreams give wings to fools.
2 As one who catches at a shadow and pursues the wind, so is anyone who believes in dreams.
3 What is seen in dreams is but a reflection, the likeness of a face looking at itself.
4 From an unclean thing what can be clean? And from something false what can be true?
5 Divinations and omens and dreams are unreal, and like a woman in labor, the mind has fantasies.
6 Unless they are sent by intervention from the Most High, pay no attention to them.
7 For dreams have deceived many, and those who put their hope in them have perished.
8 Without such deceptions the law will be fulfilled, and wisdom is complete in the mouth of the faithful.

Learning from experience

9 An educated person knows many things, and one with much experience knows what he is talking about.
10 An inexperienced person knows few things, but he that has traveled acquires much cleverness.
11 I have seen many things in my travels, and I understand more than I can express.
12 I have often been in danger of death, but have escaped because of these experiences.

14 The spirit of those who fear the Lord will live, for their hope is in him who saves them.
16 Those who fear the Lord will not be timid, or play the coward, for he is their hope.
17 Happy is the soul that fears the Lord!
18 To whom does he look? And who is his support?
19 The eyes of the Lord are on those who love him,
   a mighty shield and strong support,
   a shelter from scorching wind and a shade from noonday sun,
   a guard against stumbling and a help against falling.
20 He lifts up the soul and makes the eyes sparkle;
   he gives health and life and blessing.

Unacceptable sacrifices

21 If one sacrifices ill-gotten goods, the offering is blemished;
22 the gifts of the lawless are not acceptable.
23 The Most High is not pleased with the offerings of the ungodly,
   nor for a multitude of sacrifices does he forgive sins.
24 Like one who kills a son before his father's eyes
   is the person who offers a sacrifice from the property of the poor.
25 The bread of the needy is the life of the poor;
   whoever deprives them of it is a murderer.
26 To take away a neighbor's living is to commit murder;
27 to deprive an employee of wages is to shed blood.

28 When one builds and another tears down,
   what do they gain but hard work?
29 When one prays and another curses,
   to whose voice will the Lord listen?
30 If one washes after touching a corpse, and touches it again,
   what has been gained by washing?
31 So if one fasts for his sins,
   and goes again and does the same things,
   who will listen to his prayer?
   And what has he gained by humbling himself?

[Sirach 35]
Acceptable sacrifices

1 The one who keeps the law makes many offerings;
2 one who heeds the commandments makes an offering of well-being.
3 The one who returns a kindness offers choice flour,
4 and one who gives alms sacrifices a thank offering.
5 To keep from wickedness is pleasing to the Lord,
   and to forsake unrighteousness is an atonement.
6 Do not appear before the Lord empty-handed,
7 for all that you offer is in fulfillment of the commandment.
8 The offering of the righteous enriches the altar,
   and its pleasing odor rises before the Most High.
9 The sacrifice of the righteous is acceptable,
   and it will never be forgotten.
10 Be generous when you worship the Lord,
   and do not stint the first fruits of your hands.
11 With every gift show a cheerful face,
   and dedicate your tithe with gladness.
12 Give to the Most High as he has given to you,
   and as generously as you can afford.
13 For the Lord is the one who repays,
   and he will repay you sevenfold.

A warning against exploitation of the poor

14 Do not offer him a bribe, for he will not accept it;
15 and do not rely on a dishonest sacrifice;
   for the Lord is the judge,
   and with him there is no partiality.
16 He will not show partiality to the poor;
   but he will listen to the prayer of one who is wronged.
17 He will not ignore the supplication of the orphan,
   or the widow when she pours out her complaint.
18 Do not the tears of the widow run down her cheek
19 as she cries out against the one who causes them to fall?
20 The one whose service is pleasing to the Lord will be accepted,
   and his prayer will reach to the clouds.
21 The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds,
   and it will not rest until it reaches its goal;
   it will not desist until the Most High responds
22 and does justice for the righteous, and executes judgment. Indeed, the Lord will not delay, and like a warrior will not be patient until he crushes the loins of the unmerciful
23 and repays vengeance on the nations; until he destroys the multitude of the insolent, and breaks the scepters of the unrighteous;
24 until he repays mortals according to their deeds, and the works of all according to their thoughts;
25 until he judges the case of his people and makes them rejoice in his mercy.
26 His mercy is as welcome in time of distress as clouds of rain in time of drought.

[Sirach 36]
A prayer for the deliverance and restoration of Israel

1 Have mercy upon us, O God of all,
2 and put all the nations in fear of you.
3 Lift up your hand against foreign nations and let them see your might.
4 As you have used us to show your holiness to them, so use them to show your glory to us.
5 Then they will know, as we have known, that there is no God but you, O Lord.
6 Give new signs, and work other wonders;
7 make your hand and right arm glorious.
8 Rouse your anger and pour out your wrath;
9 destroy the adversary and wipe out the enemy.
10 Hasten the day, and remember the appointed time, and let people recount your mighty deeds.
11 Let survivors be consumed in the fiery wrath, and may those who harm your people meet destruction.
12 Crush the heads of hostile rulers who say, "There is no one but ourselves."
13 Gather all the tribes of Jacob,
16 and give them their inheritance, as at the beginning.
17 Have mercy, O Lord, on the people called by your name, on Israel, whom you have named your firstborn,
18 Have pity on the city of your sanctuary, Jerusalem, the place of your dwelling.
19 Fill Zion with your majesty, and your temple with your glory.
20 Bear witness to those whom you created in the beginning, and fulfill the prophecies spoken in your name.
21 Reward those who wait for you and let your prophets be found trustworthy.
22 Hear, O Lord, the prayer of your servants, according to your goodwill toward your people, and all who are on the earth will know that you are the Lord, the God of the ages.

Concerning discrimination

23 The stomach will take any food, yet one food is better than another.
24 As the palate tastes the kinds of game, so an intelligent mind detects false words.
25 A perverse mind will cause grief, but a person with experience will pay him back.

On choices in marriage

26 A woman will accept any man as a husband, but one girl is preferable to another.
27 A woman's beauty lights up a man's face, and there is nothing he desires more.
28 If kindness and humility mark her speech, her husband is more fortunate than other men.
29 He who acquires a wife gets his best possession,
a helper fit for him and a pillar of support.
30 Where there is no fence, the property will be plundered; and
where there is no wife, a man will become a fugitive
and a wanderer.
31 For who will trust a nimble robber
that skips from city to city?
So who will trust a man that has no nest,
but lodges wherever night overtakes him?

[Sirach 37]
False friends

1 Every friend says, "I too am a friend";
but some friends are friends only in name.
2 Is it not a sorrow like that for death itself
when a dear friend turns into an enemy?
3 O inclination to evil, why were you formed
to cover the land with deceit?
4 Some companions rejoice in the happiness of a friend,
but in time of trouble they are against him.
5 Some companions help a friend for their stomachs' sake,
yet in battle they will carry his shield.
6 Do not forget a friend during the battle,
and do not be unmindful of him when you distribute your spoils.

On taking counsel

7 All counselors praise the counsel they give,
but some give counsel in their own interest.
8 Be wary of a counselor,
and learn first what is his interest,
for he will take thought for himself.
He may cast the lot against you
9 and tell you, "Your way is good,"
and then stand aside to see what happens to you.
10 Do not consult the one who regards you with suspicion;
hide your intentions from those who are jealous of you.
11 Do not consult with a woman about her rival
   or with a coward about war,
   with a merchant about business
   or with a buyer about selling,
   with a miser about generosity
   or with the merciless about kindness,
   with an idler about any work
   or with a seasonal laborer about completing his work,
   with a lazy servant about a big task —
   pay no attention to any advice they give.
12 But associate with a godly person
   whom you know to be a keeper of the commandments,
   who is like-minded with yourself,
   and who will grieve with you if you fail.
13 And heed the counsel of your own heart,
   for no one is more faithful to you than it is.
14 For our own mind sometimes keeps us better informed
   than seven sentinels sitting high on a watchtower.
15 But above all pray to the Most High
   that he may direct your way in truth.

Enduring wisdom

16 Discussion is the beginning of every work,
   and counsel precedes every undertaking.
17 The mind is the root of all conduct;
18 it sprouts four branches,
   good and evil, life and death;
   and it is the tongue that continually rules them.
19 Some people may be clever enough to teach many,
   and yet be useless to themselves.
20 A skillful speaker may be hated;
   he will be destitute of all food,
21 for the Lord has withheld the gift of charm,
   since he is lacking in all wisdom.
22 If a person is wise to his own advantage,
   the fruits of his good sense will be praiseworthy.
23 A wise person instructs his own people,  
   and the fruits of his good sense will endure.  
24 A wise person will have praise heaped upon him,  
   and all who see him will call him happy.  
25 The days of a person's life are numbered,  
   but the days of Israel are without number.  
26 One who is wise among his people will inherit honor,  
   and his name will live forever.  

Temperance

27 My child, test yourself while you live;  
   see what is bad for you and do not give in to it.  
28 For not everything is good for everyone,  
   and no one enjoys everything.  
29 Do not be greedy for every delicacy,  
   and do not eat without restraint;  
30 for overeating brings sickness,  
   and gluttony leads to nausea.  
31 Many have died of gluttony,  
   but the one who guards against it prolongs his life.  

[Sirach 38]  
Concerning physicians

1 Honor physicians for their services,  
   for the Lord created them;  
2 for their gift of healing comes from the Most High,  
   and they are rewarded by the king.  
3 The skill of physicians makes them distinguished,  
   and in the presence of the great they are admired.  
4 The Lord created medicines out of the earth,  
   and the sensible will not despise them.  
5 Was not water made sweet with a tree  
   in order that its power might be known?  
6 And he gave skill to human beings  
   that he might be glorified in his marvelous works.  
7 By them the physician heals and takes away pain;
8 the pharmacist makes a mixture from them.
   God's works will never be finished;
   and from him health spreads over all the earth.

9 My child, when you are ill, do not delay,
   but pray to the Lord, and he will heal you.
10 Give up your faults and direct your hands rightly,
    and cleanse your heart from all sin.
11 Offer a sweet-smelling sacrifice, and a memorial portion of
    choice flour,
    and pour oil on your offering, as much as you can afford.
12 Then give the physician his place, for the Lord created him;
    do not let him leave you, for you need him.
13 There may come a time when recovery lies in the hands
    of physicians,
14 for they too pray to the Lord
    that he grant them success in diagnosis
    and in healing, for the sake of preserving life.
15 He who sins against his Maker,
    will be defiant toward the physician.

On mourning and grief

16 My child, let your tears fall for the dead,
   and as one in great pain begin the lament.
   Lay out the body with due ceremony,
   and do not neglect the burial.
17 Let your weeping be bitter and your wailing fervent;
   make your mourning worthy of the departed,
   for one day, or two, to avoid criticism;
   then be comforted for your grief.
18 For grief may result in death,
   and a sorrowful heart saps one's strength.
19 When a person is taken away, sorrow is over;
   but the life of the poor weighs down the heart.
20 Do not give your heart to grief;
   drive it away, and remember your own end.
21 Do not forget, there is no coming back; 
you do the dead no good, and you injure yourself.
22 Remember his fate, for yours is like it; 
yesterday it was his, and today it is yours.
23 When the dead is at rest, let his remembrance rest too, 
and be comforted for him when his spirit has departed.

Skilled workers contrasted with the scribe

24 The wisdom of the scribe depends on the opportunity of leisure; 
only the one who has little business can become wise.
25 How can one become wise who handles the plow, 
and who glories in the shaft of a goad, 
who drives oxen and is occupied with their work, 
and whose talk is about bulls?
26 He sets his heart on plowing furrows, 
and he is careful about fodder for the heifers.
27 So it is with every artisan and master artisan 
who labors by night as well as by day; 
those who cut the signets of seals, 
each is diligent in making a great variety; 
they set their heart on painting a lifelike image, 
and they are careful to finish their work.
28 So it is with the smith, sitting by the anvil, 
intent on his iron-work; 
the breath of the fire melts his flesh, 
and he struggles with the heat of the furnace; 
the sound of the hammer deafens his ears, 
and his eyes are on the pattern of the object. 
He sets his heart on finishing his handiwork, 
and he is careful to complete its decoration.
29 So it is with the potter sitting at his work 
and turning the wheel with his feet; 
he is always deeply concerned over his products, 
and he produces them in quantity.
30 He molds the clay with his arm
   and makes it pliable with his feet;
he sets his heart to finish the glazing,
   and he takes care in firing the kiln.

31 All these rely on their hands,
   and all are skillful in their own work.
32 Without them no city can be inhabited,
   and wherever they live, they will not go hungry.
   Yet they are not sought out for the council of the people,
      nor do they attain eminence in the public assembly.
   They do not sit in the judge's seat,
      nor do they understand the decisions of the courts;
   they cannot expound discipline or judgment,
      and they are not found among the rulers.
34a But they maintain the fabric of the world,
   and their concern is for the exercise of their trade.

Praise of the scribe

34b How different the one who devotes himself
   to the study of the law of the Most High!

[Sirach 39]

1 He seeks out the wisdom of all the ancients,
   and is concerned with prophecies;
2 he preserves the sayings of the famous
   and penetrates the subtleties of parables;
3 he seeks out the hidden meanings of proverbs
   and is at home with the obscurities of parables.
4 He serves among the great
   and appears before rulers;
   he travels in foreign lands
   and learns what is good and evil in the human lot.
5 He sets his heart to rise early
to seek the Lord who made him,
and to petition the Most High;
he opens his mouth in prayer
and asks pardon for his sins.
6 If the great Lord is willing,
he will be filled with the spirit of understanding;
he will pour forth words of wisdom of his own
and give thanks to the Lord in prayer.
7 The Lord will direct his counsel and knowledge,
as he meditates on his mysteries.
8 He will show the wisdom of what he has learned,
and will glory in the law of the LORD’s covenant.
9 Many will praise his understanding;
it will never be blotted out.
His memory will not disappear,
and his name will live through all generations.
10 Nations will speak of his wisdom,
and the congregation will proclaim his praise.
11 If he lives long, he will leave a name greater than a thousand,
and if he goes to rest, it is enough for him.

A hymn of praise

12 I have more on my mind to express;
I am full like the full moon.
13 Listen to me, my faithful children, and blossom
like a rose growing by a stream of water.
14 Send out fragrance like incense,
and put forth blossoms like a lily.
Scatter the fragrance, and sing a hymn of praise;
bless the Lord for all his works.
15 Ascribe majesty to his name
and give thanks to him with praise,
with songs on your lips, and with harps;
this is what you shall say in thanksgiving:
16 "All the works of the Lord are very good,
and whatever he commands will be done at the appointed time.
17 No one can say, 'What is this?' or 'Why is that?' —
for at the appointed time all such questions will be answered.
  At his word the waters stood in a heap,
  and the reservoirs of water at the word of his mouth.
18 When he commands, his every purpose is fulfilled,
  and none can limit his saving power.
19 The works of all are before him,
  and nothing can be hidden from his eyes.
20 From the beginning to the end of time he can see everything,
  and nothing is too marvelous for him.
21 No one can say, 'What is this?' or 'Why is that?' —
  for everything has been created for its own purpose.

22 "His blessing covers the dry land like a river,
  and drenches it like a flood.
23 But his wrath drives out the nations,
  as when he turned a watered land into salt.
24 To the faithful his ways are straight,
  but full of pitfalls for the wicked.
25 From the beginning good things were created for the good,
  but for sinners good things and bad.
26 The basic necessities of human life
  are water and fire and iron and salt
  and wheat flour and milk and honey,
  the blood of the grape and oil and clothing.
27 All these are good for the godly,
  but for sinners they turn into evils.

28 "There are winds created for vengeance,
  and in their anger they can dislodge mountains;
  on the day of reckoning they will pour out their strength
  and calm the anger of their Maker.
29 Fire and hail and famine and pestilence,
  all these have been created for vengeance;
30 the fangs of wild animals and scorpions and vipers,
  and the sword that punishes the ungodly with destruction.
31 They take delight in doing his bidding,
   always ready for his service on earth;
   and when their time comes they never disobey his command."

32 So from the beginning I have been convinced of all this
   and have thought it out and left it in writing:
33 All the works of the Lord are good,
   and he will supply every need in its time.
34 No one can say, "This is not as good as that,"
   for everything proves good in its appointed time.
35 So now sing praise with all your heart and voice,
   and bless the name of the Lord.

[Sirach 40]
Reflections on the human condition

1 Hard work was created for everyone,
   and a heavy yoke is laid on the children of Adam,
   from the day they come forth from their mother's womb
   until the day they return to the mother of all the living.
2 Perplexities and fear of heart are theirs,
   and anxious thought of the day of their death.
3 From the one who sits on a splendid throne
   to the one who grovels in dust and ashes,
4 from the one who wears purple and a crown
   to the one who is clothed in burlap,
5 there is anger and envy and trouble and unrest,
   and fear of death, and fury and strife.
   And when one rests upon his bed,
   his sleep at night confuses his mind.
6 He gets little or no rest;
   he struggles in his sleep as he did by day.
   He is troubled by the visions of his mind
   like one who has escaped from the battlefield.
7 At the moment he reaches safety he wakes up,
   astonished that his fears were groundless.
8 To all creatures, human and animal,
   but to sinners seven times more,
9 come death and bloodshed and strife and sword,
calamities and famine and ruin and plague.
10 All these were created for the wicked,
and on their account the flood came.
11 All that is of earth returns to earth,
and what is from above returns above.

12 All bribery and injustice will be blotted out,
but good faith will last forever.
13 The wealth of the unjust will dry up like a river,
and crash like a loud clap of thunder in a storm.
14 As a generous person has cause to rejoice,
so lawbreakers will utterly fail.
15 The children of the ungodly put out few branches;
they are unhealthy roots on sheer rock.
16 The reeds by any water or river bank
are plucked up before any grass;
17 but kindness is like a garden of blessings,
and almsgiving endures forever.

18 Wealth and wages make life sweet,
but better than either is finding a treasure.
19 Children and the building of a city establish one's name,
but better than either is the one who finds wisdom.
   Cattle and orchards make one prosperous;
   but a blameless wife is accounted better than either.
20 Wine and music gladden the heart,
but the love of friends is better than either.
21 The flute and the harp make sweet melody,
but a pleasant voice is better than either.
22 The eye desires grace and beauty,
but the green shoots of grain more than either.
23 A friend or companion is always welcome,
but a sensible wife is better than either.
24 Kindred and helpers are for a time of trouble,
but almsgiving rescues better than either.
25 Gold and silver make one stand firm,
but good counsel is esteemed more than either.
26 Riches and strength build up confidence, but the fear of the Lord is better than either. There is no want in the fear of the Lord, and with it there is no need to seek for help.
27 The fear of the Lord is like a garden of blessing, and covers a person better than any glory.

28 My child, do not lead the life of a beggar; it is better to die than to beg.
29 When one looks to the table of another, one's way of life cannot be considered a life. One loses self-respect with another person's food, but one who is intelligent and well instructed guards against that.
30 In the mouth of the shameless begging is sweet, but it kindles a fire inside him.

[Sirach 41]

1 O death, how bitter is the thought of you to the one at peace among possessions, who has nothing to worry about and is prosperous in everything, and still is vigorous enough to enjoy food!
2 O death, how welcome is your sentence to one who is needy and failing in strength, worn down by age and anxious about everything; to one who is contrary, and has lost all patience!
3 Do not fear death's decree for you; remember those who went before you and those who will come after.
4 This is the LORD's decree for all flesh; why then should you reject the will of the Most High? Whether life lasts for ten years or a hundred or a thousand, there are no questions asked in Hades.

5 The children of sinners are abominable children, and they frequent the haunts of the ungodly.
6 The inheritance of the children of sinners will perish, and on their offspring will be a perpetual disgrace.
7 Children will blame an ungodly father, for they suffer disgrace because of him.
8 Woe to you, the ungodly, who have forsaken the law of the Most High God!
9 If you have children, calamity will be theirs; you will beget them only for groaning.
When you stumble, there is lasting joy; and when you die, a curse is your lot.
10 Whatever comes from earth returns to earth; so the ungodly go from curse to destruction.

11 The human body is a fleeting thing, but a virtuous name will never be blotted out.
12 Have regard for your name, since it will outlive you longer than a thousand hoards of gold.
13 The days of a good life are numbered, but a good name lasts forever.

A poem on shame, true and false

14 My children, be true to your training and be at peace; hidden wisdom and unseen treasure — of what value is either?
15 Better are those who hide their folly than those who hide their wisdom.
16 Therefore show respect for my words; for it is not good to feel shame in every circumstance, nor is every kind of abashment to be approved.

17 Be ashamed of sexual immorality, before your father or mother; and of a lie, before a prince or a ruler;
18 of a crime, before a judge or magistrate; and of a breach of the law, before the congregation and the people; of unjust dealing, before your partner or your friend;
19 and of theft, in the place where you live. Be ashamed of breaking an oath or agreement, and of leaning on your elbow at meals; of surliness in receiving or giving,  
20 and of silence, before those who greet you; of looking at a prostitute,  
21 and of rejecting the appeal of a relative; of taking away someone's portion or gift, and of gazing at another man's wife;  
22 of meddling with his servant-girl — and do not approach her bed; of abusive words, before friends — and do not be insulting after making a gift.  

[Sirach 42]

1 Be ashamed of repeating what you hear, and of betraying secrets. Then you will show proper shame, and will find favor with everyone. Of the following things do not be ashamed, and do not sin to save face:  
2 Do not be ashamed of the law of the Most High and his covenant, and of rendering judgment to acquit the ungodly;  
3 of keeping accounts with a partner or with traveling companions, and of dividing the inheritance of friends;  
4 of accuracy with scales and weights, and of acquiring much or little;  
5 of profit from dealing with merchants, and of frequent disciplining of children, and of drawing blood from the back of a wicked slave.  
6 Where there is an untrustworthy wife, a seal is a good thing; and where there are many hands, lock things up.  
7 When you make a deposit, be sure it is counted and weighed, and when you give or receive, put it all in writing.
8 Do not be ashamed to correct the stupid or foolish
or the aged who are guilty of sexual immorality.
Then you will show your sound training,
and will be approved by all.

A man's anxiety over daughters

9 A daughter is a secret anxiety to her father,
and worry over her robs him of sleep;
when she is young, for fear she may not marry,
or if married, for fear she may be disliked;
10 while a virgin, for fear she may be seduced
and become pregnant in her father's house;
or having a husband, for fear she may go astray,
or, though married, for fear she may be barren.
11 Keep strict watch over a headstrong daughter,
or she may make you a laughingstock to your enemies,
a byword in the city and the assembly of the people,
and put you to shame in public gatherings.
See that there is no lattice in her room,
no spot that overlooks the approaches to the house.
12 Do not let her parade her beauty before any man,
or spend her time among married women;
13 for from garments comes the moth,
and from a woman comes woman's wickedness.
14 Better is the wickedness of a man than a woman who does good;
it is woman who brings shame and disgrace.

In praise of God and the wonders of creation

15 I will now call to mind the works of the Lord,
and will declare what I have seen.
By the word of the Lord his works are made;
and all his creatures do his will.
16 The sun looks down on everything with its light,
and the work of the Lord is full of his glory.
17 The Lord has not empowered even his holy ones to recount all his marvelous works, which the Lord the Almighty has established so that the universe may stand firm in his glory.
18 He searches out the abyss and the human heart; he understands their innermost secrets. For the Most High knows all that may be known; he sees from of old the things that are to come.
19 He discloses what has been and what is to be, and he reveals the traces of hidden things.
20 No thought escapes him, and nothing is hidden from him.
21 He has set in order the splendors of his wisdom; he is from all eternity one and the same. Nothing can be added or taken away, and he needs no one to be his counselor.
22 How desirable are all his works, and how sparkling they are to see!
23 All these things live and remain forever; each creature is preserved to meet a particular need.
24 All things come in pairs, one opposite the other, and he has made nothing incomplete.
25 Each supplements the virtues of the other. Who could ever tire of seeing his glory?

[Sirach 43]

1 The pride of the higher realms is the clear vault of the sky, as glorious to behold as the sight of the heavens.
2 The sun, when it appears, proclaims as it rises what a marvelous instrument it is, the work of the Most High.
3 At noon it parches the land, and who can withstand its burning heat?
4 A man tending a furnace works in burning heat, but three times as hot is the sun scorching the mountains; it breathes out fiery vapors, and its bright rays blind the eyes.
5 Great is the Lord who made it; at his orders it hurries on its course.

6 It is the moon that marks the changing seasons, governing the times, their everlasting sign.
7 From the moon comes the sign for festal days, a light that wanes when it completes its course.
8 The new moon, as its name suggests, renews itself; how marvelous it is in this change, a beacon to the hosts on high, shining in the vault of the heavens!

9 The glory of the stars is the beauty of heaven, a glittering array in the heights of the Lord.
10 On the orders of the Holy One they stand in their appointed places; they never relax in their watches.
11 Look at the rainbow, and praise him who made it; it is exceedingly beautiful in its brightness.
12 It encircles the sky with its glorious arc; the hands of the Most High have stretched it out.

13 By his command he sends the driving snow and speeds the lightnings of his judgment.
14 Therefore the storehouses are opened, and the clouds fly out like birds.
15 In his majesty he gives the clouds their strength, and the hailstones are broken in pieces.
17a The voice of his thunder rebukes the earth; when he appears, the mountains shake.
16 At his will the south wind blows; so do the storm from the north and the whirlwind.

17b He scatters the snow like birds flying down, and its descent is like locusts alighting.
18 The eye is dazzled by the beauty of its whiteness, and the mind is amazed as it falls.
19 He pours frost over the earth like salt, and icicles form like pointed thorns.
20 The cold north wind blows,
    and ice freezes on the water;
it settles on every pool of water,
    and the water puts it on like a breastplate.
21 He consumes the mountains and burns up the wilderness,
    and withers the tender grass like fire.
22 A mist quickly heals all things;
    the falling dew gives refreshment from the heat.

23 By his plan he stilled the deep
    and planted islands in it.
24 Those who sail the sea tell of its dangers,
    and we marvel at what we hear.
25 In it are strange and marvelous creatures,
    all kinds of living things, and huge sea-monsters.
26 Because of him each of his messengers succeeds,
    and by his word all things hold together.

27 We could say more but could never say enough;
    let the final word be: "He is the all."
28 Where can we find the strength to praise him?
    For he is greater than all his works.
29 Awesome is the Lord and very great,
    and marvelous is his power.
30 Glorify the Lord and exalt him as much as you can,
    for he surpasses even that.
    When you exalt him, summon all your strength,
    and do not grow weary, for you cannot praise him enough.
31 Who has seen him and can describe him?
    Or who can extol him as he is?
32 Many things greater than these lie hidden,
    for I have seen but few of his works.
33 For the Lord has made all things,
    and to the godly he has given wisdom.
HYMN IN HONOR OF OUR ANCESTORS  
[Sirach 44]  
In praise of Israel's ancestors; Introduction

1 Let us now sing the praises of famous men,  
our ancestors in their generations.
2 The Lord apportioned to them great glory,  
his majesty from the beginning.
3 There were those who ruled in their kingdoms,  
and made a name for themselves by their valor;  
those who gave counsel because they were intelligent;  
those who spoke in prophetic oracles;
4 those who led the people by their counsels  
and by their knowledge of the people's lore;  
they were wise in their words of instruction;
5 those who composed musical tunes,  
or put verses in writing;
6 rich men endowed with resources,  
living peacefully in their homes —
7 all these were honored in their generations,  
and were the pride of their times.
8 Some of them have left behind a name,  
so that others declare their praise.
9 But of others there is no memory;  
they have perished as though they had never existed;  
they have become as though they had never been born,  
they and their children after them.
10 But these also were godly men,  
whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten;
11 their wealth will remain with their descendants,  
and their inheritance with their children's children.
12 Their descendants stand by the covenants;  
their children also, for their sake.
13 Their offspring will continue forever,  
and their glory will never be blotted out.
14 Their bodies are buried in peace,  
but their name lives on generation after generation.
15 The assembly declares their wisdom,  
    and the congregation proclaims their praise.

**Enoch**

16 Enoch pleased the Lord and was taken up,  
    an example of repentance to all generations.

**Noah**

17 Noah was found perfect and righteous;  
    in the time of wrath he kept the race alive;  
    therefore a remnant was left on the earth  
    when the flood came.
18 Everlasting covenants were made with him  
    that all flesh should never again be blotted out by a flood.

**Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel**

19 Abraham was the great father of a multitude of nations,  
    and no one has been found like him in glory.
20 He kept the law of the Most High,  
    and entered into a covenant with him;  
    he certified the covenant in his flesh,  
    and when he was tested he proved faithful.
21 Therefore the Lord assured him with an oath  
    that the nations would be blessed through his offspring;  
    that he would make him as numerous as the dust of the earth,  
    and exalt his offspring like the stars,  
    and give them an inheritance from sea to sea  
    and from the Euphrates to the ends of the earth.
To Isaac also he gave the same assurance
for the sake of his father Abraham.
The blessing of all people and the covenant
he made to rest on the head of Jacob;
he acknowledged him with his blessings,
and gave him his inheritance;
he divided his portions,
and distributed them among twelve tribes.

Moses

From his descendants the Lord brought forth a godly man,
who found favor in the sight of all

[Sirach 45]

and was beloved by God and people,
Moses, whose memory is blessed.
He made him equal in glory to the holy ones,
and made him great, to the terror of his enemies.
By his words he performed swift miracles;
the Lord glorified him in the presence of kings.
He gave him commandments for his people,
and revealed to him his glory.
For his faithfulness and meekness he consecrated him,
choosing him out of all humankind.
He allowed him to hear his voice,
and led him into the dark cloud,
and gave him the commandments face to face,
the law of life and knowledge,
so that he might teach Jacob the covenant,
and Israel his decrees.

Aaron and Phinehas

He exalted Aaron, a holy man like Moses
who was his brother, of the tribe of Levi.
7 He made an everlasting covenant with him,
   and gave him the priesthood of the people.
   He blessed him with stateliness,
   and put a glorious robe on him.
8 He clothed him in perfect splendor,
   and strengthened him with the symbols of authority,
   the linen undergarments, the long robe, and the ephod.
9 And he encircled him with pomegranates,
   with many golden bells all around,
   to send forth a sound as he walked,
   to make their ringing heard in the temple
   as a reminder to his people;
10 with the sacred vestment, of gold and violet
   and purple, the work of an embroiderer;
   with the oracle of judgment, Urim and Thummim;
11 with twisted crimson, the work of an artisan;
   with precious stones engraved like seals,
   in a setting of gold, the work of a jeweler,
   to commemorate in engraved letters
   each of the tribes of Israel;
12 with a gold crown upon his turban,
   inscribed like a seal with "Holiness,"
   a distinction to be prized, the work of an expert,
   a delight to the eyes, richly adorned.
13 Before him such beautiful things did not exist.
   No outsider ever put them on,
   but only his sons
   and his descendants in perpetuity.
14 His sacrifices shall be wholly burned
   twice every day continually.
15 Moses ordained him,
   and anointed him with holy oil;
   it was an everlasting covenant for him
   and for his descendants as long as the heavens endure,
   to minister to the Lord and serve as priest
   and bless his people in his name.
16 He chose him out of all the living
to offer sacrifice to the Lord,
incense and a pleasing odor as a memorial portion,
to make atonement for the people.
17 In his commandments he gave him
authority and statutes and judgments,
to teach Jacob the testimonies,
and to enlighten Israel with his law.
18 Outsiders conspired against him,
and envied him in the wilderness,
Dathan and Abiram and their followers
and the company of Korah, in wrath and anger.
19 The Lord saw it and was not pleased,
and in the heat of his anger they were destroyed;
he performed wonders against them
to consume them in flaming fire.
20 He added glory to Aaron
and gave him a heritage;
he allotted to him the best of the first fruits,
and prepared bread of first fruits in abundance;
21 for they eat the sacrifices of the Lord,
which he gave to him and his descendants.
22 But in the land of the people he has no inheritance,
and he has no portion among the people;
for the Lord himself is his portion and inheritance.

23 Phinehas son of Eleazar ranks third in glory
for being zealous in the fear of the Lord,
and standing firm, when the people turned away,
in the noble courage of his soul;
and he made atonement for Israel.
24 Therefore a covenant of friendship was established with him,
that he should be leader of the sanctuary and of his people,
that he and his descendants should have
the dignity of the priesthood forever.
25 Just as a covenant was established with David
son of Jesse of the tribe of Judah,
that the king's heritage passes only from son to son,
so the heritage of Aaron is for his descendants alone.

A prayer for high priests

26 And now bless the Lord
who has crowned you with glory.
May the Lord grant you wisdom of mind
to judge his people with justice,
so that their prosperity may not vanish,
and that their glory may endure through all their generations.

[Sirach 46]
Joshua, Caleb, the judges, and Samuel

1 Joshua son of Nun was mighty in war,
and was the successor of Moses in the prophetic office.
He became, as his name implies,
a great savior of God's elect,
to take vengeance on the enemies that rose against them,
so that he might give Israel its inheritance.
2 How glorious he was when he lifted his hands
and brandished his sword against the cities!
3 Who before him ever stood so firm?
For he waged the wars of the Lord.
4 Was it not through him that the sun stood still
and one day became as long as two?
5 He called upon the Most High, the Mighty One,
when enemies pressed him on every side,
and the great Lord answered him
with hailstones of mighty power.
6 He overwhelmed that nation in battle,
and on the slope he destroyed his opponents,
so that the nations might know his armament,
that he was fighting in the sight of the Lord;
for he was a devoted follower of the Mighty One.
And in the days of Moses he proved his loyalty, he and Caleb son of Jephunneh: they opposed the congregation, restrained the people from sin, and stilled their wicked grumbling.

And these two alone were spared out of six hundred thousand infantry, to lead the people into their inheritance, the land flowing with milk and honey.

The Lord gave Caleb strength, which remained with him in his old age, so that he went up to the hill country, and his children obtained it for an inheritance, so that all the Israelites might see how good it is to follow the Lord.

The judges also, with their respective names, whose hearts did not fall into idolatry and who did not turn away from the Lord — may their memory be blessed!

May their bones send forth new life from where they lie, and may the names of those who have been honored live again in their children!

Samuel was beloved by his Lord; a prophet of the Lord, he established the kingdom and anointed rulers over his people.

By the law of the Lord he judged the congregation, and the Lord watched over Jacob.

By his faithfulness he was proved to be a prophet, and by his words he became known as a trustworthy seer.

He called upon the Lord, the Mighty One, when his enemies pressed him on every side, and he offered in sacrifice a suckling lamb.

Then the Lord thundered from heaven, and made his voice heard with a mighty sound; he subdued the leaders of the enemy and all the rulers of the Philistines.
19 Before the time of his eternal sleep,
   Samuel bore witness before the Lord and his anointed:
   "No property, not so much as a pair of shoes,
   have I taken from anyone!"
   And no one accused him.
20 Even after he had fallen asleep, he prophesied
   and made known to the king his death,
   and lifted up his voice from the ground
   in prophecy, to blot out the wickedness of the people.

[Sirach 47]
Nathan, David, and Solomon

1 After him Nathan rose up
   to prophesy in the days of David.
2 As the fat is set apart from the offering of well-being,
   so David was set apart from the Israelites.
3 He played with lions as though they were young goats,
   and with bears as though they were lambs of the flock.
4 In his youth did he not kill a giant,
   and take away the people's disgrace,
   when he whirled the stone in the sling
   and struck down the boasting Goliath?
5 For he called on the Lord, the Most High,
   and he gave strength to his right arm
   to strike down a mighty warrior,
   and to exalt the power of his people.
6 So they glorified him for the tens of thousands he conquered,
   and praised him for the blessings bestowed by the Lord,
   when the glorious diadem was given to him.
7 For he wiped out his enemies on every side,
   and annihilated his adversaries the Philistines;
   he crushed their power to our own day.
8 In all that he did he gave thanks
   to the Holy One, the Most High, proclaiming his glory;
   he sang praise with all his heart,
   and he loved his Maker.
9 He placed singers before the altar,
   to make sweet melody with their voices,
   and daily they sing his praises.
10 He gave beauty to the festivals,
   and arranged their times throughout the year,
   while they praised God's holy name,
   and the sanctuary resounded from early morning.
11 The Lord took away his sins,
   and exalted his power forever;
   he gave him a covenant of kingship
   and a glorious throne in Israel.
12 After him a wise son rose up
   who because of him lived in security:
13 Solomon reigned in an age of peace,
   because God made all his borders tranquil,
   so that he might build a house in his name
   and provide a sanctuary to stand forever.
14 How wise you were when you were young!
   You overflowed like the Nile with understanding.
15 Your influence spread throughout the earth,
   and you filled it with proverbs having deep meaning.
16 Your fame reached to far-off islands,
   and you were loved for your peaceful reign.
17 Your songs, proverbs, and parables,
   and the answers you gave astounded the nations.
18 In the name of the Lord God,
   who is called the God of Israel,
   you gathered gold like tin
   and amassed silver like lead.
19 But you brought in women to lie at your side,
   and through your body you were brought into subjection.
20 You stained your honor,
   and defiled your family line,
   so that you brought wrath upon your children,
   and they were grieved at your folly,
21 because the sovereignty was divided
   and a rebel kingdom arose out of Ephraim.
22 But the Lord will never give up his mercy,  
or cause any of his works to perish;  
he will never blot out the descendants of his chosen one,  
or destroy the family line of him who loved him.  
So he gave a remnant to Jacob,  
and to David a root from his own family.

Kings and prophets; Solomon's son, Rehoboam; Jeroboam

23 Solomon rested with his ancestors,  
and left behind him one of his sons,  
broad in folly and lacking in sense,  
Rehoboam, whose policy drove the people to revolt.  
Then Jeroboam son of Nebat led Israel into sin  
and started Ephraim on its sinful ways.

24 Their sins increased more and more,  
until they were exiled from their land.

25 For they sought out every kind of wickedness,  
until vengeance came upon them.

[Sirach 48]

Elijah

1 Then Elijah arose, a prophet like fire,  
and his word burned like a torch.

2 He brought a famine upon them,  
and by his zeal he made them few in number.

3 By the word of the Lord he shut up the heavens,  
and also three times brought down fire.

4 How glorious you were, Elijah, in your wondrous deeds!  
Whose glory is equal to yours?

5 You raised a corpse from death  
and from Hades, by the word of the Most High.

6 You sent kings down to destruction,  
and famous men, from their sickbeds.

7 You heard rebuke at Sinai  
and judgments of vengeance at Horeb.
8 You anointed kings to inflict retribution,  
    and prophets to succeed you.  
9 You were taken up by a whirlwind of fire,  
    in a chariot with horses of fire.  
10 At the appointed time, it is written, you are destined  
    to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury,  
    to turn the hearts of parents to their children,  
    and to restore the tribes of Jacob.  
11 Happy are those who saw you  
    and were adorned with your love!  
    For we also shall surely live.  

Elisha  

12 When Elijah was enveloped in the whirlwind,  
    Elisha was filled with his spirit.  
    He performed twice as many signs,  
    and marvels with every utterance of his mouth.  
    Never in his lifetime did he tremble before any ruler,  
    nor could anyone intimidate him at all.  
13 Nothing was too hard for him,  
    and when he was dead, his body prophesied.  
14 In his life he did wonders,  
    and in death his deeds were marvelous.  

15 Despite all this the people did not repent,  
    nor did they forsake their sins,  
    until they were carried off as plunder from their land,  
    and were scattered over all the earth.  
    The people were left very few in number,  
    but with a ruler from the house of David.  
16 Some of them did what was right,  
    but others sinned more and more.
Rulers and prophets in the kingdom of Judah; Hezekiah

17 Hezekiah fortified his city,
   and brought water into its midst;
   he tunneled the rock with iron tools,
   and built cisterns for the water.
18 In his days Sennacherib invaded the country;
   he sent his commander from Lachish and departed;
   he shook his fist against Zion,
   and made great boasts in his arrogance.
19 Then their hearts were shaken and their hands trembled,
   and they were in anguish, like women in labor.
20 But they called upon the Lord who is merciful,
   spreading out their hands toward him.
   The Holy One quickly heard them from heaven,
   and delivered them through Isaiah.
21 The Lord struck down the camp of the Assyrians,
   and his angel wiped them out.
22 For Hezekiah did what was pleasing to the Lord,
   and he kept firmly to the ways of his ancestor David,
   as he was commanded by the prophet Isaiah,
   who was great and trustworthy in his visions.

Isaiah

23 In Isaiah's days the sun went backward,
   and he prolonged the life of the king.
24 By his dauntless spirit he saw the future,
   and comforted the mourners in Zion.
25 He revealed what was to occur to the end of time,
   and the hidden things before they happened.
[Sirach 49]
Josiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Job, and the Twelve Prophets

1 The name of Josiah is like blended incense
   prepared by the skill of the perfumer;
   his memory is as sweet as honey to every mouth,
   and like music at a banquet of wine.
2 He did what was right by reforming the people,
   and removing the wicked abominations.
3 He kept his heart fixed on the Lord;
   in lawless times he made godliness prevail.

4 Except for David and Hezekiah and Josiah,
   all of them were great sinners,
   for they abandoned the law of the Most High;
   the kings of Judah came to an end.
5 They gave their power to others,
   and their glory to a foreign nation,
6 who set fire to the chosen city of the sanctuary,
   and made its streets desolate,
   as Jeremiah had foretold.
7 For they had mistreated him,
   who even in the womb had been consecrated a prophet,
   to pluck up and ruin and destroy,
   and likewise to build and to plant.

8 It was Ezekiel who saw the vision of glory,
   which God showed him above the chariot of the cherubim.
9 For God also mentioned Job
   who held fast to all the ways of justice.
10 May the bones of the Twelve Prophets
    send forth new life from where they lie,
    for they comforted the people of Jacob
    and delivered them with confident hope.
Leaders of the restoration: Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and Nehemiah

11 How shall we magnify Zerubbabel?
    He was like a signet ring on the right hand,
12 and so was Jeshua son of Jozadak;
    in their days they built the house
    and raised a temple holy to the Lord,
    destined for everlasting glory.
13 The memory of Nehemiah also is lasting;
    he raised our fallen walls,
    and set up gates and bars,
    and rebuilt our ruined houses.

Conclusion of the historical review

14 Few have ever been created on earth like Enoch,
    for he was taken up from the earth.
15 Nor was anyone ever born like Joseph;
    even his bones were cared for.
16 Shem and Seth and Enosh were honored,
    but above every other created living being was Adam.

[Sirach 50]
Simon, son of Onias

1 The leader of his brothers and the pride of his people
    was the high priest, Simon son of Onias,
    who in his life repaired the house,
    and in his time fortified the temple.
2 He laid the foundations for the high double walls,
    the high retaining walls for the temple enclosure.
3 In his days a water cistern was dug,
    a reservoir like the sea in circumference.
4 He considered how to save his people from ruin,
    and fortified the city against siege.
5 How glorious he was, surrounded by the people,
    as he came out of the house of the curtain.
6 Like the morning star among the clouds,  
    like the full moon at the festal season;  
7 like the sun shining on the temple of the Most High,  
    like the rainbow gleaming in splendid clouds;  
8 like roses in the days of first fruits,  
    like lilies by a spring of water,  
    like a green shoot on Lebanon on a summer day;  
9 like fire and incense in the censer,  
    like a vessel of hammered gold  
    studded with all kinds of precious stones;  
10 like an olive tree laden with fruit,  
    and like a cypress towering in the clouds.  
11 When he put on his glorious robe  
    and clothed himself in perfect splendor,  
    when he went up to the holy altar,  
    he made the court of the sanctuary glorious.

12 When he received the portions from the hands of the priests,  
    as he stood by the hearth of the altar  
    with a garland of brothers around him,  
    he was like a young cedar on Lebanon  
    surrounded by the trunks of palm trees.  
13 All the sons of Aaron in their splendor  
    held the LORD's offering in their hands  
    before the whole congregation of Israel.  
14 Finishing the service at the altars,  
    and arranging the offering to the Most High, the Almighty,  
15 he held out his hand for the cup  
    and poured a drink offering of the blood of the grape;  
    he poured it out at the foot of the altar,  
    a pleasing odor to the Most High, the king of all.  
16 Then the sons of Aaron shouted;  
    they blew their trumpets of hammered metal;  
    they sounded a mighty fanfare  
    as a reminder before the Most High.
17 Then all the people together quickly
fell to the ground on their faces
to worship their Lord,
the Almighty, God Most High.

18 Then the singers praised him with their voices
in sweet and full-toned melody.
19 And the people of the Lord Most High offered
their prayers before the Merciful One,
until the order of worship of the Lord was ended,
and they completed his ritual.
20 Then Simon came down and raised his hands
over the whole congregation of Israelites,
to pronounce the blessing of the Lord with his lips,
and to glory in his name;
21 and they bowed down in worship a second time,
to receive the blessing from the Most High.

22 And now bless the God of all,
who everywhere works great wonders,
who fosters our growth from birth,
and deals with us according to his mercy.
23 May he give us gladness of heart,
and may there be peace in our days
in Israel, as in the days of old.
24 May he entrust to us his mercy,
and may he deliver us in our days!

An invective against Idumeans

25 Two nations my soul detests,
and the third is not even a people:
26 Those who live in Seir, and the Philistines,
and the foolish people that live in Shechem.
A postscript

27 Instruction in understanding and knowledge
   I have written in this book,
   Jesus son of Eleazar son of Sirach of Jerusalem,
   whose mind poured forth wisdom.
28 Happy are those who concern themselves with these things,
   and those who lay them to heart will become wise.
29 For if they put them into practice, they will be equal to anything,
   for the fear of the Lord is their path.

PRAYER OF JESUS SON OF SIRACH
[Sirach 51]
Appendices
A psalm of thanksgiving for deliverance

1 I give you thanks, O Lord and King,
   and praise you, O God my Savior.
   I give thanks to your name,
2 for you have been my protector and helper
   and have delivered me from destruction
   and from the trap laid by a slanderous tongue,
   from lips that fabricate lies.
In the face of my adversaries
   you have been my helper
3 and delivered me,
   in the greatness of your mercy and of your name,
   from grinding teeth about to devour me,
   from the hand of those seeking my life,
   from the many troubles I endured,
4 from choking fire on every side,
   and from the midst of fire that I had not kindled,
5 from the deep belly of Hades,
   from an unclean tongue and lying words —
6 the slander of an unrighteous tongue to the king.
   My soul drew near to death,
   and my life was on the brink of Hades below.
7 They surrounded me on every side,
    and there was no one to help me;
I looked for human assistance,
    and there was none.
8 Then I remembered your mercy, O Lord,
    and your kindness from of old,
    for you rescue those who wait for you
    and save them from the hand of their enemies.
9 And I sent up my prayer from the earth,
    and begged for rescue from death.
10 I cried out, "Lord, you are my Father;
    do not forsake me in the days of trouble,
    when there is no help against the proud.
11 I will praise your name continually,
    and will sing hymns of thanksgiving."
My prayer was heard,
12 for you saved me from destruction
    and rescued me in time of trouble.
    For this reason I thank you and praise you,
    and I bless the name of the Lord.

The Hebrew text adds:

    Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
    for his mercy endures forever;

    Give thanks to the God of praises,
    for his mercy endures forever;
    Give thanks to the guardian of Israel,
    for his mercy endures forever;

    Give thanks to him who formed all things,
    for his mercy endures forever;

    Give thanks to the redeemer of Israel,
    for his mercy endures forever;
Give thanks to him who gathers the dispersed of Israel, for his mercy endures forever;

Give thanks to him who rebuilt his city and his sanctuary, for his mercy endures forever;

Give thanks to him who makes a horn to sprout for the house of David, for his mercy endures forever;

Give thanks to him who has chosen the sons of Zadok to be priests, for his mercy endures forever;

Give thanks to the shield of Abraham, for his mercy endures forever;

Give thanks to the rock of Isaac, for his mercy endures forever;

Give thanks to the mighty one of Jacob, for his mercy endures forever;

Give thanks to him who has chosen Zion, for his mercy endures forever;

Give thanks to the King of the kings of kings, for his mercy endures forever;

He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his loyal ones.

For the children of Israel, the people close to him. Praise the LORD!
An acrostic poem about the author's love for Wisdom

13 While I was still young, before I went on my travels,
    I sought wisdom openly in my prayer.
14 Before the temple I asked for her,
    and I will search for her until the end.

15 From the first blossom to the ripening grape
    my heart delighted in her;
    my foot walked on the straight path;
    from my youth I followed her steps.
16 I inclined my ear a little and received her,
    and I found for myself much instruction.
17 I made progress in her;
    to him who gives wisdom I will give glory.

18 For I resolved to live according to wisdom,
    and I was zealous for the good,
    and I shall never be disappointed.
19 My soul grappled with wisdom,
    and in my conduct I was strict;
    I spread out my hands to the heavens,
    and lamented my ignorance of her.
20 I directed my soul to her,
    and in purity I found her.
    With her I gained understanding from the first;
    therefore I will never be forsaken.
21 My heart was stirred to seek her;
    therefore I have gained a prize possession.
22 The Lord gave me my tongue as a reward,
    and I will praise him with it.

23 Draw near to me, you who are uneducated,
    and lodge in the house of instruction.
24 Why do you say you are lacking in these things,
    and why do you endure such great thirst?
25 I opened my mouth and said,
  Acquire wisdom for yourselves without money.

26 Put your neck under her yoke,
  and let your souls receive instruction;
  it is to be found close by.

27 See with your own eyes that I have labored but little
  and found for myself much serenity.
28 Hear but a little of my instruction,
  and through me you will acquire silver and gold.

29 May your soul rejoice in God's mercy,
  and may you never be ashamed to praise him.
30 Do your work in good time,
  and in his own time God will give you your reward.
Introduction

The book of Baruch was probably written sometime between 200 and 60 BCE; it is set, however, during the Babylonian exile of the early sixth century BCE and attributed to Jeremiah's friend and secretary, Baruch son of Neriah (Jer 32.12; 36.4; 43.3; 45.1). Although Jeremiah and Baruch both are reported in the book of Baruch and other Jewish sources (Seder Olam Rabbah 36; Midrash Rabbah Song 5.5; Babylonian Talmud Megillah 16b), that Baruch went to Babylon. The number of historical errors in the introduction (1.1-14) makes it unlikely that the book was written by Baruch or near the time of the exile. Although few clues to the date of the composition exist, allusions to Sir 24 (ca. 180 BCE) and Dan 9 (ca. 165 BCE) imply a date not earlier than the middle of the second century BCE.

Most of Baruch is made up of pastiches of biblical passages copied or paraphrased (e.g., Dan 9; Job 28; Isa 40-66). This mosaic technique was popular in the late Second Temple period. Authors recombined texts in new ways both as a means of interpreting canonical literature and as a means of creating new literary entities.

Baruch falls into two main sections, each of which consists of two parts. The first section, in prose, includes an introduction (1.1-14) and a corporate confession of sin (1.15-3.8) for Jews in Jerusalem to recite at the altar there, along with appropriate sacrifices, on various festival days and seasons. The idea of a letter or scroll written in Babylon to be read aloud in Jerusalem is derived from the exchange of letters recorded in Jer 29 and the scroll of Jeremiah's oracles penned by Baruch and read before King Jehoiakim in 605 BCE (Jer 36). The corporate confession is modeled on Dan 9.4-19 (cf. Ezra 9.6-15; Neh 9.6-37).
The second section consists of two poems. The first (3.9-4.4) is a paean of praise of Wisdom. Drawing on Job 28 and Sir 24, it describes Wisdom as elusive but also as the Torah, God’s precious gift to Israel. The second contains an address by Jerusalem to the people of Israel (4.5-29) and a rhetorical address to Jerusalem (4.30-5.9), inspired no doubt by Isa 51.17-52.10; 54; and 60-62.

The text on which the following translation is based is the Greek Septuagint; ancient Syriac, Latin, Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic, and Armenian versions based on the Greek also exist. The prose section (1.1-3.8) has long been viewed as a translation of a lost Hebrew originals.

Each of the major sections of the book has distinctive stylistic aspects that may indicate different authors. For instance, different names for God are used in the confession ("Lord"), in the wisdom poem ("God"), and in the Zion poem ("the Everlasting"). Judgment as to whether Baruch is the product of a single author or of an editor who compiled already existing materials is complicated by the heavy dependence of the confession and the poems on various scriptural models, since the dependence may account for much of the variation in style and theological perspective.

The book of Baruch would have well served Jewish communities in Judah and the Diaspora during the Seleucid and later eras of suffering and repression, since it deals with theological themes of particular interest to Jews at that time: the confession of corporate sin in the context of biblical history, the Torah as the gift of divine wisdom, and the restoration of Zion. There is no evidence, however, that any Jewish community afforded Baruch canonical status. In Christianity it is included among the deuterocanonical books of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, but is listed in the Apocrypha by Protestant churches.
[Baruch 1]
Historical introduction

1 These are the words of the book that Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah son of Zedekiah son of Hasadiah son of Hilkiah wrote in Babylon, 2 in the fifth year, on the seventh day of the month, at the time when the Chaldeans took Jerusalem and burned it with fire.

3 Baruch read the words of this book to Jeconiah son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and to all the people who came to hear the book, 4 and to the nobles and the princes, and to the elders, and to all the people, small and great, all who lived in Babylon by the river Sud.

5 Then they wept, and fasted, and prayed before the Lord; 6 they collected as much money as each could give, 7 and sent it to Jerusalem to the high priest Jehoiakim son of Hilkiah son of Shallum, and to the priests, and to all the people who were present with him in Jerusalem. 8 At the same time, on the tenth day of Sivan, Baruch took the vessels of the house of the Lord, which had been carried away from the temple, to return them to the land of Judah — the silver vessels that Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of Judah, had made, 9 after King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried away from Jerusalem Jeconiah and the princes and the prisoners and the nobles and the people of the land, and brought them to Babylon.

10 They said: Here we send you money; so buy with the money burnt offerings and sin offerings and incense, and prepare a grain offering, and offer them on the altar of the Lord our God; 11 and pray for the life of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and for the life of his son Belshazzar, so that their days on earth may be like the days of heaven. 12 The Lord will give us strength, and light to our eyes; we shall live under the protection of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and under the protection of his son Belshazzar, and we shall serve them many days and find favor in their sight. 13 Pray also for us to the Lord our God, for we have sinned against the Lord our God, and to this day the anger of the Lord and his wrath have not turned away from us. 14 And you shall read aloud this scroll that we are sending you, to make your
confession in the house of the Lord on the days of the festivals and at appointed seasons.

Confession of sin

15 And you shall say: The Lord our God is in the right, but there is open shame on us today, on the people of Judah, on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, 16 and on our kings, our rulers, our priests, our prophets, and our ancestors, 17 because we have sinned before the Lord. 18 We have disobeyed him, and have not heeded the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in the statutes of the Lord that he set before us. 19 From the time when the Lord brought our ancestors out of the land of Egypt until today, we have been disobedient to the Lord our God, and we have been negligent, in not heeding his voice. 20 So to this day there have clung to us the calamities and the curse that the Lord declared through his servant Moses at the time when he brought our ancestors out of the land of Egypt to give to us a land flowing with milk and honey. 21 We did not listen to the voice of the Lord our God in all the words of the prophets whom he sent to us, 22 but all of us followed the intent of our own wicked hearts by serving other gods and doing what is evil in the sight of the Lord our God.

[Baruch 2]

1 So the Lord carried out the threat he spoke against us: against our judges who ruled Israel, and against our kings and our rulers and the people of Israel and Judah. 2 Under the whole heaven there has not been done the like of what he has done in Jerusalem, in accordance with the threats that were written in the law of Moses. 3 Some of us ate the flesh of their sons and others the flesh of their daughters. 4 He made them subject to all the kingdoms around us, to be an object of scorn and a desolation among all the surrounding peoples, where the Lord has scattered them. 5 They were brought down and not raised up, because our nation sinned against the Lord our God, in not heeding his voice.

6 The Lord our God is in the right, but there is open shame on us and our ancestors this very day. 7 All those calamities with which the Lord
threatened us have come upon us. 8 Yet we have not entreated the favor of the Lord by turning away, each of us, from the thoughts of our wicked hearts. 9 And the Lord has kept the calamities ready, and the Lord has brought them upon us, for the Lord is just in all the works that he has commanded us to do. 10 Yet we have not obeyed his voice, to walk in the statutes of the Lord that he set before us.

11 And now, O Lord God of Israel, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and with signs and wonders and with great power and outstretched arm, and made yourself a name that continues to this day, 12 we have sinned, we have been ungodly, we have done wrong, O Lord our God, against all your ordinances. 13 Let your anger turn away from us, for we are left, few in number, among the nations where you have scattered us. 14 Hear, O Lord, our prayer and our supplication, and for your own sake deliver us, and grant us favor in the sight of those who have carried us into exile; 15 so that all the earth may know that you are the Lord our God, for Israel and his descendants are called by your name.

16 O Lord, look down from your holy dwelling, and consider us. Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear; 17 open your eyes, O Lord, and see, for the dead who are in Hades, whose spirit has been taken from their bodies, will not ascribe glory or justice to the Lord; 18 but the person who is deeply grieved, who walks bowed and feeble, with failing eyes and famished soul, will declare your glory and righteousness, O Lord.

19 For it is not because of any righteous deeds of our ancestors or our kings that we bring before you our prayer for mercy, O Lord our God. 20 For you have sent your anger and your wrath upon us, as you declared by your servants the prophets, saying: 21 Thus says the Lord: Bend your shoulders and serve the king of Babylon, and you will remain in the land that I gave to your ancestors. 22 But if you will not obey the voice of the Lord and will not serve the king of Babylon, 23 I will make to cease from the towns of Judah and from the region around Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, and the whole land will be a desolation without inhabitants.
24 But we did not obey your voice, to serve the king of Babylon; and you have carried out your threats, which you spoke by your servants the prophets, that the bones of our kings and the bones of our ancestors would be brought out of their resting place; 25 and indeed they have been thrown out to the heat of day and the frost of night. They perished in great misery, by famine and sword and pestilence. 26 And the house that is called by your name you have made as it is today, because of the wickedness of the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

27 Yet you have dealt with us, O Lord our God, in all your kindness and in all your great compassion, 28 as you spoke by your servant Moses on the day when you commanded him to write your law in the presence of the people of Israel, saying, 29 "If you will not obey my voice, this very great multitude will surely turn into a small number among the nations, where I will scatter them. 30 For I know that they will not obey me, for they are a stiff-necked people. But in the land of their exile they will come to themselves 31 and know that I am the Lord their God. I will give them a heart that obeys and ears that hear; 32 they will praise me in the land of their exile, and will remember my name 33 and turn from their stubbornness and their wicked deeds; for they will remember the ways of their ancestors, who sinned before the Lord. 34 I will bring them again into the land that I swore to give to their ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and they will rule over it; and I will increase them, and they will not be diminished. 35 I will make an everlasting covenant with them to be their God and they shall be my people; and I will never again remove my people Israel from the land that I have given them."

[Baruch 3]

1 O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, the soul in anguish and the wearied spirit cry out to you. 2 Hear, O Lord, and have mercy, for we have sinned before you. 3 For you are enthroned forever, and we are perishing forever. 4 O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, hear now the prayer of the people of Israel, the children of those who sinned before you, who did not heed the voice of the Lord their God, so that calamities have clung to us. 5 Do not remember the iniquities of our
ancestors, but in this crisis remember your power and your name. 6 For you are the Lord our God, and it is you, O Lord, whom we will praise. 7 For you have put the fear of you in our hearts so that we would call upon your name; and we will praise you in our exile, for we have put away from our hearts all the iniquity of our ancestors who sinned against you. 8 See, we are today in our exile where you have scattered us, to be reproached and cursed and punished for all the iniquities of our ancestors, who forsook the Lord our God.

**Wisdom, found by God, was given to Israel as the Torah**

9 Hear the commandments of life, O Israel; give ear, and learn wisdom!  
10 Why is it, O Israel, why is it that you are in the land of your enemies, that you are growing old in a foreign country, that you are defiled with the dead, that you are counted among those in Hades?  
12 You have forsaken the fountain of wisdom.  
13 If you had walked in the way of God, you would be living in peace forever.  
14 Learn where there is wisdom, where there is strength, where there is understanding, so that you may at the same time discern where there is length of days, and life, where there is light for the eyes, and peace.

15 Who has found her place? And who has entered her storehouses?  
16 Where are the rulers of the nations, and those who lorded it over the animals on earth;  
17 those who made sport of the birds of the air, and who hoarded up silver and gold in which people trust, and there is no end to their getting;  
18 those who schemed to get silver, and were anxious, but there is no trace of their works?
19 They have vanished and gone down to Hades, and others have arisen in their place.

20 Later generations have seen the light of day, and have lived upon the earth; but they have not learned the way to knowledge, nor understood her paths, nor laid hold of her.
21 Their descendants have strayed far from her way.
22 She has not been heard of in Canaan, or seen in Teman;
23 the descendants of Hagar, who seek for understanding on the earth, the merchants of Merran and Teman, the story-tellers and the seekers for understanding, have not learned the way to wisdom, or given thought to her paths.

24 O Israel, how great is the house of God, how vast the territory that he possesses!
25 It is great and has no bounds; it is high and immeasurable.
26 The giants were born there, who were famous of old, great in stature, expert in war.
27 God did not choose them, or give them the way to knowledge;
28 so they perished because they had no wisdom, they perished through their folly.

29 Who has gone up into heaven, and taken her, and brought her down from the clouds?
30 Who has gone over the sea, and found her, and will buy her for pure gold?
31 No one knows the way to her, or is concerned about the path to her.
32 But the one who knows all things knows her, he found her by his understanding. The one who prepared the earth for all time filled it with four-footed creatures;
the one who sends forth the light, and it goes;
    he called it, and it obeyed him, trembling;
the stars shone in their watches, and were glad;
    he called them, and they said, "Here we are!"
    They shone with gladness for him who made them.
This is our God;
    no other can be compared to him.
He found the whole way to knowledge,
    and gave her to his servant Jacob
    and to Israel, whom he loved.
Afterward she appeared on earth
    and lived with humankind.

[Baruch 4]

1 She is the book of the commandments of God,
    the law that endures forever.
    All who hold her fast will live,
    and those who forsake her will die.
2 Turn, O Jacob, and take her;
    walk toward the shining of her light.
3 Do not give your glory to another,
    or your advantages to an alien people.
4 Happy are we, O Israel,
    for we know what is pleasing to God.

Poem of comfort and restoration

5 Take courage, my people,
    who perpetuate Israel's name!
6 It was not for destruction
    that you were sold to the nations,
    but you were handed over to your enemies
    because you angered God.
7 For you provoked the one who made you
    by sacrificing to demons and not to God.
8 You forgot the everlasting God, who brought you up,
    and you grieved Jerusalem, who reared you.
9 For she saw the wrath that came upon you from God, and she said:
   Listen, you neighbors of Zion,
   God has brought great sorrow upon me;
10 for I have seen the exile of my sons and daughters, which the Everlasting brought upon them.
11 With joy I nurtured them, but I sent them away with weeping and sorrow.
12 Let no one rejoice over me, a widow and bereaved of many;
   I was left desolate because of the sins of my children, because they turned away from the law of God.
13 They had no regard for his statutes; they did not walk in the ways of God's commandments, or tread the paths his righteousness showed them.
14 Let the neighbors of Zion come; remember the capture of my sons and daughters, which the Everlasting brought upon them.
15 For he brought a distant nation against them, a nation ruthless and of a strange language, which had no respect for the aged and no pity for a child.
16 They led away the widow's beloved sons, and bereaved the lonely woman of her daughters.

17 But I, how can I help you?
18 For he who brought these calamities upon you will deliver you from the hand of your enemies.
19 Go, my children, go; for I have been left desolate.
20 I have taken off the robe of peace and put on sackcloth for my supplication; I will cry to the Everlasting all my days.

21 Take courage, my children, cry to God, and he will deliver you from the power and hand of the enemy.
22 For I have put my hope in the Everlasting to save you,  
    and joy has come to me from the Holy One,  
    because of the mercy that will soon come to you  
    from your everlasting savior.

23 For I sent you out with sorrow and weeping,  
    but God will give you back to me with joy and gladness forever.

24 For as the neighbors of Zion have now seen your capture,  
    so they soon will see your salvation by God,  
    which will come to you with great glory  
    and with the splendor of the Everlasting.

25 My children, endure with patience the wrath that has come  
    upon you from God. Your enemy has overtaken you,  
    but you will soon see their destruction  
    and will tread upon their necks.

26 My pampered children have traveled rough roads;  
    they were taken away like a flock carried off by the enemy.

27 Take courage, my children, and cry to God,  
    for you will be remembered by the one who brought this  
    upon you.

28 For just as you were disposed to go astray from God,  
    return with tenfold zeal to seek him.

29 For the one who brought these calamities upon you  
    will bring you everlasting joy with your salvation.

30 Take courage, O Jerusalem,  
    for the one who named you will comfort you.

31 Wretched will be those who mistreated you  
    and who rejoiced at your fall.

32 Wretched will be the cities that your children served as slaves;  
    wretched will be the city that received your offspring.

33 For just as she rejoiced at your fall  
    and was glad for your ruin,  
    so she will be grieved at her own desolation.

34 I will take away her pride in her great population,  
    and her insolence will be turned to grief.

35 For fire will come upon her from the Everlasting for many days,  
    and for a long time she will be inhabited by demons.
36 Look toward the east, O Jerusalem,
    and see the joy that is coming to you from God.
37 Look, your children are coming, whom you sent away;
    they are coming, gathered from east and west,
at the word of the Holy One,
    rejoicing in the glory of God.

[Baruch 5]

1 Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem,
    and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God.
2 Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God;
    put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting;
3 for God will show your splendor everywhere under heaven.
4 For God will give you evermore the name,
    "Righteous Peace, Godly Glory."

5 Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height;
    look toward the east,
    and see your children gathered from west and east
    at the word of the Holy One,
    rejoicing that God has remembered them.
6 For they went out from you on foot,
    led away by their enemies;
    but God will bring them back to you,
    carried in glory, as on a royal throne.
7 For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting
    hills be made low and the valleys filled up, to make level ground,
    so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God.
8 The woods and every fragrant tree
    have shaded Israel at God’s command.
9 For God will lead Israel with joy,
    in the light of his glory,
    with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.
LETTER OF JEREMIAH

Introduction

These seventy-three verses purport to be a letter composed by Jeremiah for those about to be taken into exile from Judah to Babylonia in 597 BCE by Nebuchadnezzar's forces. It was undoubtedly inspired by Jeremiah's letter (Jer 29.1-23) to those taken hostage in 597, a decade before the final defeat of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem. The Letter of Jeremiah is an impassioned sermon against idol worship and polytheism based on Jer 10, and particularly Jer 10.11: "The gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens." The Letter is also influenced, however, by other biblical polemics against idol worship (Ps 115.4-8; 135.15-18; Isa 40.18.20; 41.6-7; 44.9-20; 46.1-7; etc.). The body of the letter is composed of a series of ten warnings to Jews, who might be attracted to idol worship, to recognize and be wary of idolatry. Each part ends on a common refrain, with variations, insisting that idols are not gods nor to be confused with the one, true God (vv. 16, 23, 29, 40, 44, 52, 56, 65, 69, 72).

Although all surviving manuscripts of the letter are in Greek, including one fragment from Cave 7 at Qumran, the Letter was probably composed originally in Hebrew or Aramaic. Most scholars date the Letter to the Hellenistic period. The reference in v. 3 to an exile lasting seven generations (280 years) has been taken as a clue to the date of composition of the letter (317 BCE), but the reference to seven generations is probably symbolic. The allusion to the Letter in 2 Macc 2.1-3 would indicate a date no later than the second century BCE.

The Letter has different placements in various manuscripts and versions of the Bible. It stands as a discrete work between Lamentations and Ezekiel in two major Greek Septuagint manuscripts (fourth-century Vaticanus and fifth-century Alexandrius), in the Milan Syriac Hexapla,
and in Arabic. In other Greek and Syriac manuscripts, and in the Latin
version, it appears as the sixth chapter of Baruch. Since it is, however,
clearly independent of Baruch, the New Revised Standard Version
treats it as a separate book. This pseudepigraphical work was written
for a Jewish audience, perhaps in Palestine. It is not included in either
the Jewish or Protestant canons, but is one of the deuterocanonical
books of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches.

[Letter of Jeremiah 6]

Historical introduction

1 A copy of a letter that Jeremiah sent to those who were to be taken
to Babylon as exiles by the king of the Babylonians, to give them the
message that God had commanded him.

The People Face a Long Captivity

2 Because of the sins that you have committed before God, you will be
taken to Babylon as exiles by Nebuchadnezzar, king of the
Babylonians. 3 Therefore when you have come to Babylon you will
remain there for many years, for a long time, up to seven generations;
after that I will bring you away from there in peace. 4 Now in Babylon
you will see gods made of silver and gold and wood, which people
carry on their shoulders, and which cause the heathen to fear. 5 So
beware of becoming at all like the foreigners or of letting fear for
these gods possess you 6 when you see the multitude before and
behind them worshiping them. But say in your heart, "It is you, O Lord,
whom we must worship." 7 For my angel is with you, and he is
watching over your lives.

Condemnation of idolatry

8 Their tongues are smoothed by the carpenter, and they themselves
are overlaid with gold and silver; but they are false and cannot speak. 9
People take gold and make crowns for the heads of their gods, as they
might for a girl who loves ornaments. 10 Sometimes the priests secretly take gold and silver from their gods and spend it on themselves, 11 or even give some of it to the prostitutes on the terrace. They deck their gods out with garments like human beings — these gods of silver and gold and wood 12 that cannot save themselves from rust and corrosion. When they have been dressed in purple robes, 13 their faces are wiped because of the dust from the temple, which is thick upon them. 14 One of them holds a scepter, like a district judge, but is unable to destroy anyone who offends it. 15 Another has a dagger in its right hand, and an ax, but cannot defend itself from war and robbers. 16 From this it is evident that they are not gods; so do not fear them.

Uselessness and helplessness of idols

17 For just as someone's dish is useless when it is broken, 18 so are their gods when they have been set up in the temples. Their eyes are full of the dust raised by the feet of those who enter. And just as the gates are shut on every side against anyone who has offended a king, as though under sentence of death, so the priests make their temples secure with doors and locks and bars, in order that they may not be plundered by robbers. 19 They light more lamps for them than they light for themselves, though their gods can see none of them. 20 They are just like a beam of the temple, but their hearts, it is said, are eaten away when crawling creatures from the earth devour them and their robes. They do not notice 21 when their faces have been blackened by the smoke of the temple. 22 Bats, swallows, and birds alight on their bodies and heads; and so do cats. 23 From this you will know that they are not gods; so do not fear them.

Idols are unable to feel or move

24 As for the gold that they wear for beauty — it will not shine unless someone wipes off the tarnish; for even when they were being cast, they did not feel it. 25 They are bought without regard to cost, but there is no breath in them. 26 Having no feet, they are carried on the shoulders of others, revealing to humankind their worthlessness. And those who serve them are put to shame 27 because, if any of these gods falls to the ground, they themselves must pick it up. If anyone sets
it upright, it cannot move itself; and if it is tipped over, it cannot straighten itself. Gifts are placed before them just as before the dead. 28 The priests sell the sacrifices that are offered to these gods and use the money themselves. Likewise their wives preserve some of the meat with salt, but give none to the poor or helpless. 29 Sacrifices to them may even be touched by women in their periods or at childbirth. Since you know by these things that they are not gods, do not fear them.

Idols cannot repay good or evil, or help worshipers

30 For how can they be called gods? Women serve meals for gods of silver and gold and wood; 31 and in their temples the priests sit with their clothes torn, their heads and beards shaved, and their heads uncovered. 32 They howl and shout before their gods as some do at a funeral banquet. 33 The priests take some of the clothing of their gods to clothe their wives and children. 34 Whether one does evil to them or good, they will not be able to repay it. They cannot set up a king or depose one. 35 Likewise they are not able to give either wealth or money; if one makes a vow to them and does not keep it, they will not require it. 36 They cannot save anyone from death or rescue the weak from the strong. 37 They cannot restore sight to the blind; they cannot rescue one who is in distress. 38 They cannot take pity on a widow or do good to an orphan. 39 These things that are made of wood and overlaid with gold and silver are like stones from the mountain, and those who serve them will be put to shame. 40 Why then must anyone think that they are gods, or call them gods?

The Chaldeans dishonor their own idols

Besides, even the Chaldeans themselves dishonor them; for when they see someone who cannot speak, they bring Bel and pray that the mute may speak, as though Bel were able to understand! 41 Yet they themselves cannot perceive this and abandon them, for they have no sense. 42 And the women, with cords around them, sit along the passageways, burning bran for incense. 43 When one of them is led off by one of the passers-by and is taken to bed by him, she derides the woman next to her, because she was not as attractive as herself and
her cord was not broken. 44 Whatever is done for these idols is false. Why then must anyone think that they are gods, or call them gods?

**Idols are but the work of human hands**

45 They are made by carpenters and goldsmiths; they can be nothing but what the artisans wish them to be. 46 Those who make them will certainly not live very long themselves; 47 how then can the things that are made by them be gods? They have left only lies and reproach for those who come after. 48 For when war or calamity comes upon them, the priests consult together as to where they can hide themselves and their gods. 49 How then can one fail to see that these are not gods, for they cannot save themselves from war or calamity? 50 Since they are made of wood and overlaid with gold and silver, it will afterward be known that they are false. 51 It will be manifest to all the nations and kings that they are not gods but the work of human hands, and that there is no work of God in them. 52 Who then can fail to know that they are not gods?

**The impotence of idols**

53 For they cannot set up a king over a country or give rain to people. 54 They cannot judge their own cause or deliver one who is wronged, for they have no power; 55 they are like crows between heaven and earth. When fire breaks out in a temple of wooden gods overlaid with gold or silver, their priests will flee and escape, but the gods will be burned up like timbers. 56 Besides, they can offer no resistance to king or enemy. Why then must anyone admit or think that they are gods?

**Idols are helpless, useless, and not to be compared with celestial phenomena**

57 Gods made of wood and overlaid with silver and gold are unable to save themselves from thieves or robbers. 58 Anyone who can will strip them of their gold and silver and of the robes they wear, and go off with this booty, and they will not be able to help themselves. 59 So it is better to be a king who shows his courage, or a household utensil that serves its owner's need, than to be these false gods; better even the
door of a house that protects its contents, than these false gods; better also a wooden pillar in a palace, than these false gods.

60 For sun and moon and stars are bright, and when sent to do a service, they are obedient. 61 So also the lightning, when it flashes, is widely seen; and the wind likewise blows in every land. 62 When God commands the clouds to go over the whole world, they carry out his command. 63 And the fire sent from above to consume mountains and woods does what it is ordered. But these idols are not to be compared with them in appearance or power. 64 Therefore one must not think that they are gods, nor call them gods, for they are not able either to decide a case or to do good to anyone. 65 Since you know then that they are not gods, do not fear them.

The helplessness of idols

66 They can neither curse nor bless kings; 67 they cannot show signs in the heavens for the nations, or shine like the sun or give light like the moon. 68 The wild animals are better than they are, for they can flee to shelter and help themselves. 69 So we have no evidence whatever that they are gods; therefore do not fear them.

Idols are compared with a scarecrow, thornbush, and corpse

70 Like a scarecrow in a cucumber bed, which guards nothing, so are their gods of wood, overlaid with gold and silver. 71 In the same way, their gods of wood, overlaid with gold and silver, are like a thornbush in a garden on which every bird perches; or like a corpse thrown out in the darkness. 72 From the purple and linen that rot upon them you will know that they are not gods; and they will finally be consumed themselves, and be a reproach in the land. 73 Better, therefore, is someone upright who has no idols; such a person will be far above reproach.
The Additions to the Greek Book of Daniel

- The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews
- Susanna
- Bel and the Dragon

Greek manuscripts of both the Septuagint and the Theodotion versions of the book of Daniel add three Additions to the twelve original Hebrew and Aramaic chapters: "The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews," "Susanna," and "Bel and the Dragon." Behind the Greek may lie Hebrew or Aramaic originals, although no such versions of the three stories have been found even among the Dead Sea Scrolls, and there is no indisputable Talmudic reference to them. Like the folktales in Dan 1-6, the Additions in all probability originated prior to the Maccabean revolt in the mid-second century BCE; they may have been originally composed as early as the Persian period (fifth-fourth century BCE). Scholars debate the place of composition: a Semitic (Hebrew or Aramaic) original would suggest a provenance in Alexandria. The Additions, which do not cite each other, likely circulated independently and only later, perhaps ca. 100 BCE when the book of Daniel was translated into Greek, were added to the Danielic corpus. The first independent citations of the Additions date from the church fathers of the second century CE.

The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews are found in all Greek versions between Dan 3.23 and 3.24. The Septuagint locates the other two Additions at the end of the book of Daniel, after 12.13; Theodotion's version places Susanna at the opening of the book of Daniel, and Bel and the Dragon at the conclusion of ch 6. Other ancient
versions follow Theodotian's order. The NRSV follows Theodotion's text but places the Additions by themselves in the Apocrypha rather than integrating them into the text.

THE PRAYER OF AZARIAH AND THE SONG OF THE THREE JEWS

Introduction

The Prayer of Azariah (vv. 1-22) and the Song of the Three Jews (vv. 28-68), along with a brief prose paragraph (vv. 23-27) concerning the fate of the three in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, are placed by ancient manuscripts between Dan 3.23 and 3.24. Likely composed independently in the second or first century BCE, the Prayer and Song (with the exception of the end of the Song) may have originally had no connection to the book of Daniel. They appear as numbers 7 and 8 of the fifteen "Odes" added to the Psalter in a few manuscripts of the Septuagint, a placement that complements the resemblance of these Additions to Ps 148 in terms of theme and Ps 136 in terms of structure. Their placement in Dan 3 gives their general emphasis on hope for deliverance, national repentance, and divine faithfulness a poignant focus as the three Jews face death in Babylonian exile.

Similar prayers and hymns are a hallmark of Second Temple Jewish texts, and they are found in such works as Judith, Tobit, and Baruch, as well as in Dan 9 and among the scrolls discovered at Qumran (the Dead Sea Scrolls); they may represent early forms of synagogue liturgies. The Additions to Daniel are, in particular, comparable to the Additions to Esther: In both, prose narrative is supplemented with prayer and song that emphasize the piety of the main characters. The Prayer of Azariah resembles other postexilic works highlighting divine righteousness, the failure of the covenant community to remain faithful, assertion of divine mercy, and appeal for mercy (Ps 106; Ezra 9.6-15; Neh 1.5-11; Bar
1.15-3.8; and some Qumran texts). The Song of the Three Jews has allusions to numerous psalmic and prophetic passages in it exhortations to the heavens (vv. 36-14), nature (vv. 42-51), earth and its creatures (vv. 52-59), and humanity (vv. 60-68). Unlike the book of Daniel and the Prayer of Azariah, however, it does not suggest a period of persecution or a time when the Temple was either destroyed or profaned.

Whether the Prayer and Song were initially written in Hebrew or Aramaic or even Greek remains debated; their place of composition does as well, although the Prayer contains several references that correspond to the time of Antiochus IV (175-164 BCE).

The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews

The Prayer of Azariah

(Additions to Daniel, inserted between 3.23 and 3.24)

1 They walked around in the midst of the flames, singing hymns to God and blessing the Lord. 2 Then Azariah stood still in the fire and prayed aloud:

3 “Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our ancestors, and worthy of praise; and glorious is your name forever!
4 For you are just in all you have done; all your works are true and your ways right, and all your judgments are true.
5 You have executed true judgments in all you have brought upon us and upon Jerusalem, the holy city of our ancestors; by a true judgment you have brought all this upon us because of our sins.
6 For we have sinned and broken your law in turning away from you; in all matters we have sinned grievously.
7 We have not obeyed your commandments, we have not kept them or done what you have commanded us for our own good.
8 So all that you have brought upon us,
and all that you have done to us,
you have done by a true judgment.
9 You have handed us over to our enemies, lawless and hateful rebels,
and to an unjust king, the most wicked in all the world.
10 And now we cannot open our mouths;
we, your servants who worship you, have become a shame and
a reproach.
11 For your name's sake do not give us up forever,
and do not annul your covenant.
12 Do not withdraw your mercy from us,
for the sake of Abraham your beloved
and for the sake of your servant Isaac
and Israel your holy one,
13 to whom you promised
  to multiply their descendants like the stars of heaven
  and like the sand on the shore of the sea.
14 For we, O Lord, have become fewer than any other nation,
and are brought low this day in all the world because of our sins.
15 In our day we have no ruler, or prophet, or leader,
  no burnt offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense,
  no place to make an offering before you and to find mercy.
16 Yet with a contrite heart and a humble spirit may we be accepted,
17 as though it were with burnt offerings of rams and bulls,
or with tens of thousands of fat lambs;
such may our sacrifice be in your sight today,
and may we unreservedly follow you,
for no shame will come to those who trust in you.
18 And now with all our heart we follow you;
we fear you and seek your presence.
19 Do not put us to shame,
but deal with us in your patience
and in your abundant mercy.
20 Deliver us in accordance with your marvelous works,
and bring glory to your name, O Lord.
21 Let all who do harm to your servants be put to shame;
  let them be disgraced and deprived of all power,
  and let their strength be broken.
22 Let them know that you alone are the Lord God, glorious over the whole world."

Protection in the furnace

23 Now the king's servants who threw them in kept stoking the furnace with naphtha, pitch, tow, and brushwood. 24 And the flames poured out above the furnace forty-nine cubits, 25 and spread out and burned those Chaldeans who were caught near the furnace. 26 But the angel of the Lord came down into the furnace to be with Azariah and his companions, and drove the fiery flame out of the furnace, 27 and made the inside of the furnace as though a moist wind were whistling through it. The fire did not touch them at all and caused them no pain or distress.

Song of thanksgiving

28 Then the three with one voice praised and glorified and blessed God in the furnace:
29 "Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our ancestors, and to be praised and highly exalted forever;
30 And blessed is your glorious, holy name, and to be highly praised and highly exalted forever.
31 Blessed are you in the temple of your holy glory, and to be extolled and highly glorified forever.
32 Blessed are you who look into the depths from your throne on the cherubim, and to be praised and highly exalted forever.
33 Blessed are you on the throne of your kingdom, and to be extolled and highly exalted forever.
34 Blessed are you in the firmament of heaven, and to be sung and glorified forever.

The litany of praise

35 "Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord; sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever."
36 Bless the Lord, you heavens;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
37 Bless the Lord, you angels of the Lord;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
38 Bless the Lord, all you waters above the heavens;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
39 Bless the Lord, all you powers of the Lord;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
40 Bless the Lord, sun and moon;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
41 Bless the Lord, stars of heaven;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.

42 "Bless the Lord, all rain and dew;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
43 Bless the Lord, all you winds;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
44 Bless the Lord, fire and heat;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
45 Bless the Lord, winter cold and summer heat;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
46 Bless the Lord, dews and falling snow;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
47 Bless the Lord, nights and days;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
48 Bless the Lord, light and darkness;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
49 Bless the Lord, ice and cold;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
50 Bless the Lord, frosts and snows;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
51 Bless the Lord, lightnings and clouds;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.

52 "Let the earth bless the Lord;  
let it sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
53 Bless the Lord, mountains and hills;  
sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
54 Bless the Lord, all that grows in the ground;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
55 Bless the Lord, seas and rivers;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
56 Bless the Lord, you springs;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
57 Bless the Lord, you whales and all that swim in the waters;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
58 Bless the Lord, all birds of the air;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
59 Bless the Lord, all wild animals and cattle;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.

60 "Bless the Lord, all people on earth;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
61 Bless the Lord, O Israel;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
62 Bless the Lord, you priests of the Lord;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
63 Bless the Lord, you servants of the Lord;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
64 Bless the Lord, spirits and souls of the righteous;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
65 Bless the Lord, you who are holy and humble in heart;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.

66 "Bless the Lord, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael;
   sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever.
   For he has rescued us from Hades and saved us from the power of
deadth, and delivered us from the midst of the burning fiery
furnace; from the midst of the fire he has delivered us.
67 Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
   for his mercy endures forever.
68 All who worship the Lord, bless the God of gods,
   sing praise to him and give thanks to him,
   for his mercy endures forever."
Introduction

Often called the first detective story, this Addition to the book of Daniel appears in two different forms and locations in the early textual traditions. The Septuagint (and the Vulgate) locate it after Dan 13; Theodotion, the version followed in this as well as most modern translations, locates the story at the beginning of the book of Daniel, since Sus 45 describes Daniel as a "young man." Perhaps composed as early as the Persian period (fifth-fourth century BCE), Susanna's tale was added to the Danielic literature probably ca. 100 BCE. The story may originally not have been about Daniel, and the naming of the rescuing lad Daniel thus a secondary attribute of the story, added when the tale was attached to the other materials concerning Daniel, just as the Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Jews may not have had an original connection to Dan 3. Susanna's setting in peaceful Babylon, in which the enemies are not wicked pagan kings but corrupt Jewish judges, contrasts with threats emphasized in Dan 1-6.

Like Greek Esther, Judith, and Sarah of the book of Tobit, Susanna is beautiful and chaste, and as in those books, prayer and piety are major motifs. Indeed, with the exception of the villainous elders, all the characters — including the narrator — mention God. First cited as having canonical status by the church father Irenaeus of Lyons in the late second century CE, Susanna's story was also adopted by Samaritan and medieval Jewish (including Falashic) writers.

Susanna

Susanna’s beauty attracts two elders

1 There was a man living in Babylon whose name was Joakim. 2 He married the daughter of Hilkiah, named Susanna, a very beautiful
woman and one who feared the Lord. 3 Her parents were righteous, and had trained their daughter according to the law of Moses. 4 Joakim was very rich, and had a fine garden adjoining his house; the Jews used to come to him because he was the most honored of them all.

5 That year two elders from the people were appointed as judges. Concerning them the Lord had said: "Wickedness came forth from Babylon, from elders who were judges, who were supposed to govern the people." 6 These men were frequently at Joakim's house, and all who had a case to be tried came to them there.

7 When the people left at noon, Susanna would go into her husband's garden to walk. 8 Every day the two elders used to see her, going in and walking about, and they began to lust for her. 9 They suppressed their consciences and turned away their eyes from looking to Heaven or remembering their duty to administer justice. 10 Both were overwhelmed with passion for her, but they did not tell each other of their distress, 11 for they were ashamed to disclose their lustful desire to seduce her. 12 Day after day they watched eagerly to see her.

13 One day they said to each other, "Let us go home, for it is time for lunch." So they both left and parted from each other. 14 But turning back, they met again; and when each pressed the other for the reason, they confessed their lust. Then together they arranged for a time when they could find her alone.

The attempted rape

15 Once, while they were watching for an opportune day, she went in as before with only two maids, and wished to bathe in the garden, for it was a hot day. 16 No one was there except the two elders, who had hidden themselves and were watching her. 17 She said to her maids, "Bring me olive oil and ointments, and shut the garden doors so that I can bathe." 18 They did as she told them: they shut the doors of the garden and went out by the side doors to bring what they had been commanded; they did not see the elders, because they were hiding.
When the maids had gone out, the two elders got up and ran to her. They said, "Look, the garden doors are shut, and no one can see us. We are burning with desire for you; so give your consent, and lie with us. If you refuse, we will testify against you that a young man was with you, and this was why you sent your maids away."

Susanna's response

Susanna groaned and said, "I am completely trapped. For if I do this, it will mean death for me; if I do not, I cannot escape your hands. I choose not to do it; I will fall into your hands, rather than sin in the sight of the Lord."

Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and the two elders shouted against her. And one of them ran and opened the garden doors. When the people in the house heard the shouting in the garden, they rushed in at the side door to see what had happened to her. And when the elders told their story, the servants felt very much ashamed, for nothing like this had ever been said about Susanna.

The Elders Testify against Susanna

The next day, when the people gathered at the house of her husband Joakim, the two elders came, full of their wicked plot to have Susanna put to death. In the presence of the people they said, "Send for Susanna daughter of Hilkiah, the wife of Joakim." So they sent for her. And she came with her parents, her children, and all her relatives.

Now Susanna was a woman of great refinement and beautiful in appearance. As she was veiled, the scoundrels ordered her to be unveiled, so that they might feast their eyes on her beauty. Those who were with her and all who saw her were weeping.

Then the two elders stood up before the people and laid their hands on her head. Through her tears she looked up toward Heaven, for her heart trusted in the Lord. The elders said, "While we were walking in the garden alone, this woman came in with two maids, shut
the garden doors, and dismissed the maids. 37 Then a young man, who was hiding there, came to her and lay with her. 38 We were in a corner of the garden, and when we saw this wickedness we ran to them. 39 Although we saw them embracing, we could not hold the man, because he was stronger than we, and he opened the doors and got away. 40 We did, however, seize this woman and asked who the young man was, 41 but she would not tell us. These things we testify."

Because they were elders of the people and judges, the assembly believed them and condemned her to death.

**Susanna's prayer**

42 Then Susanna cried out with a loud voice, and said, "O eternal God, you know what is secret and are aware of all things before they come to be; 43 you know that these men have given false evidence against me. And now I am to die, though I have done none of the wicked things that they have charged against me!"

**Daniel responds**

44 The Lord heard her cry. 45 Just as she was being led off to execution, God stirred up the holy spirit of a young lad named Daniel, 46 and he shouted with a loud voice, "I want no part in shedding this woman's blood!"

**Daniel Rescues Susanna**

47 All the people turned to him and asked, "What is this you are saying?" 48 Taking his stand among them he said, "Are you such fools, O Israelites, as to condemn a daughter of Israel without examination and without learning the facts? 49 Return to court, for these men have given false evidence against her."
Susanna’s acquittal

50 So all the people hurried back. And the rest of the elders said to him, "Come, sit among us and inform us, for God has given you the standing of an elder." 51 Daniel said to them, "Separate them far from each other, and I will examine them."

52 When they were separated from each other, he summoned one of them and said to him, "You old relic of wicked days, your sins have now come home, which you have committed in the past, pronouncing unjust judgments, condemning the innocent and acquitting the guilty, though the Lord said, 'You shall not put an innocent and righteous person to death.' 54 Now then, if you really saw this woman, tell me this: Under what tree did you see them being intimate with each other?" He answered, "Under a mastic tree." 55 And Daniel said, "Very well! This lie has cost you your head, for the angel of God has received the sentence from God and will immediately cut you in two."

56 Then, putting him to one side, he ordered them to bring the other. And he said to him, "You offspring of Canaan and not of Judah, beauty has beguiled you and lust has perverted your heart. 57 This is how you have been treating the daughters of Israel, and they were intimate with you through fear; but a daughter of Judah would not tolerate your wickedness. 58 Now then, tell me: Under what tree did you catch them being intimate with each other?" He answered, "Under an evergreen oak." 59 Daniel said to him, "Very well! This lie has cost you also your head, for the angel of God is waiting with his sword to split you in two, so as to destroy you both."

60 Then the whole assembly raised a great shout and blessed God, who saves those who hope in him. 61 And they took action against the two elders, because out of their own mouths Daniel had convicted them of bearing false witness; they did to them as they had wickedly planned to do to their neighbor. 62 Acting in accordance with the law of Moses, they put them to death. Thus innocent blood was spared that day.
63 Hilkiah and his wife praised God for their daughter Susanna, and so did her husband Joakim and all her relatives, because she was found innocent of a shameful deed.

Epilogue

64 And from that day onward Daniel had a great reputation among the people.
BEL AND THE DRAGON

Introduction

Perhaps composed as early as the Persian period (fifth-fourth centuries BCE) as a midrash on Jer 51; these idol parodies which appear as ch 14 of the Greek version of the book of Daniel display the foolishness of pagan worship, divine protection of the faithful Jews, and the cleverness of the court favorite, Daniel. In the account of Bel, Daniel demonstrates that the idol is not a god by proving that it does not eat the food set out for it each night; the second story reverses this scenario as Daniel proves the dragon is not divine by feeding it a noxious concoction that kills it. This second story recapitulates the account of Daniel in the lion's den (Dan 6.16-24) and adds to it Daniel's own miraculous feeding by the prophet Habbakuk. Food references culminate at the end, when Daniel's enemies are eaten by the lions into whose den Daniel had been thrown.

Bel and the Dragon
Daniel in the Persian court

1 When King Astyages was laid to rest with his ancestors, Cyrus the Persian succeeded to his kingdom. 2 Daniel was a companion of the king, and was the most honored of all his Friends.

The worship of Bel

3 Now the Babylonians had an idol called Bel, and every day they provided for it twelve bushels of choice flour and forty sheep and six measures of wine. 4 The king revered it and went every day to worship it. But Daniel worshiped his own God.
So the king said to him, "Why do you not worship Bel?" 5 He answered, "Because I do not revere idols made with hands, but the living God, who created heaven and earth and has dominion over all living creatures."

6 The king said to him, "Do you not think that Bel is a living god? Do you not see how much he eats and drinks every day?" 7 And Daniel laughed, and said, "Do not be deceived, O king, for this thing is only clay inside and bronze outside, and it never ate or drank anything."

**Bel's trial**

8 Then the king was angry and called the priests of Bel and said to them, "If you do not tell me who is eating these provisions, you shall die. 9 But if you prove that Bel is eating them, Daniel shall die, because he has spoken blasphemy against Bel." Daniel said to the king, "Let it be done as you have said."

10 Now there were seventy priests of Bel, besides their wives and children. So the king went with Daniel into the temple of Bel. 11 The priests of Bel said, "See, we are now going outside; you yourself, O king, set out the food and prepare the wine, and shut the door and seal it with your signet. 12 When you return in the morning, if you do not find that Bel has eaten it all, we will die; otherwise Daniel will, who is telling lies about us." 13 They were unconcerned, for beneath the table they had made a hidden entrance, through which they used to go in regularly and consume the provisions. 14 After they had gone out, the king set out the food for Bel. Then Daniel ordered his servants to bring ashes, and they scattered them throughout the whole temple in the presence of the king alone. Then they went out, shut the door and sealed it with the king’s signet, and departed. 15 During the night the priests came as usual, with their wives and children, and they ate and drank everything.
16 Early in the morning the king rose and came, and Daniel with him. 17 The king said, "Are the seals unbroken, Daniel?" He answered, "They are unbroken, O king." 18 As soon as the doors were opened, the king looked at the table, and shouted in a loud voice, "You are great, O Bel, and in you there is no deceit at all!"

19 But Daniel laughed and restrained the king from going in. "Look at the floor," he said, "and notice whose footprints these are." 20 The king said, "I see the footprints of men and women and children."

21 Then the king was enraged, and he arrested the priests and their wives and children. They showed him the secret doors through which they used to enter to consume what was on the table. 22 Therefore the king put them to death, and gave Bel over to Daniel, who destroyed it and its temple.

**The destruction of the dragon**

23 Now in that place there was a great dragon, which the Babylonians revered. 24 The king said to Daniel, "You cannot deny that this is a living god; so worship him." 25 Daniel said, "I worship the Lord my God, for he is the living God. 26 But give me permission, O king, and I will kill the dragon without sword or club." The king said, "I give you permission."

27 Then Daniel took pitch, fat, and hair, and boiled them together and made cakes, which he fed to the dragon. The dragon ate them, and burst open. Then Daniel said, "See what you have been worshiping!"

**Daniel in the lion pit**

28 When the Babylonians heard about it, they were very indignant and conspired against the king, saying, "The king has become a Jew; he has destroyed Bel, and killed the dragon, and slaughtered the priests." 29 Going to the king, they said, "Hand Daniel over to us, or else we will kill you and your household." 30 The king saw that they were pressing him hard, and under compulsion he handed Daniel over to them.
Daniel in the Lions' Den

31 They threw Daniel into the lions' den, and he was there for six days. 32 There were seven lions in the den, and every day they had been given two human bodies and two sheep; but now they were given nothing, so that they would devour Daniel.

33 Now the prophet Habakkuk was in Judea; he had made a stew and had broken bread into a bowl, and was going into the field to take it to the reapers. 34 But the angel of the Lord said to Habakkuk, "Take the food that you have to Babylon, to Daniel, in the lions' den." 35 Habakkuk said, "Sir, I have never seen Babylon, and I know nothing about the den." 36 Then the angel of the Lord took him by the crown of his head and carried him by his hair; with the speed of the wind he set him down in Babylon, right over the den.

37 Then Habakkuk shouted, "Daniel, Daniel! Take the food that God has sent you." 38 Daniel said, "You have remembered me, O God, and have not forsaken those who love you." 39 So Daniel got up and ate. And the angel of God immediately returned Habakkuk to his own place.

40 On the seventh day the king came to mourn for Daniel. When he came to the den he looked in, and there sat Daniel! 41 The king shouted with a loud voice, "You are great, O Lord, the God of Daniel, and there is no other besides you!" 42 Then he pulled Daniel out, and threw into the den those who had attempted his destruction, and they were instantly eaten before his eyes.
Introduction

Set in the tumultuous years of 175-143 BCE, 1 Maccabees narrates the history of the revolt against Seleucid rule in Judea led by Judas Maccabeus and his brothers. Although the book opens with a brief historical summary of events leading up to the revolt, a word of background on the religious situation will be helpful to the reader. Judea had known a long period of relative peace and prosperity, first under Alexander the Great (332-323 BCE), then under the Ptolemies, the successors to Alexander's rule in Egypt (323-198 BCE). As a result of Alexander's rule, Hellenism, a mixture of Greek and Semitic cultures, had dominated all the countries of the eastern Mediterranean basin. The book of Sirach and the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek (the Septuagint) demonstrate the influence of Greek ideas on Judaism during the fourth and third centuries BCE. By the second century, however, when Judea came under the control of the Seleucids, the successors to Alexander's rule in Mesopotamia and Syria, Jews were divided over the problem of accommodating to Gentile culture. The upper class in Jerusalem, the Hellenizers, had long adopted Greek ways, while the poorer people of the rural areas tended to cling to the customs of their ancestors. The conflict among Judeans is evident at the beginning of 1 Maccabees (1.11-15) and is present throughout the book.

In this situation of complex religious, economic, and political tensions, the actions of the Seleucid rule Antiochus IV were a match in a tinderbox. Motivated perhaps by a political desire to remove Jewish religious law as a source of conflict and potential rebellion within Judea, Antiochus tried to eradicate the distinctive identity of the Jews. By plundering the Temple and outlawing religious practices, however, Antiochus instead sparked the first Jewish war of independence as well as the first Jewish martyrdoms. The first chapters of 1 Maccabees
describe this edict and its immediate consequences. Jews were prohibited from making daily offerings in the Temple, keeping the sabbath, and circumcising their sons, and were required to make sacrifices to other gods. Those who obeyed the Torah rather than the kind were publicly put to death, and those who withdrew to the wilderness were slaughtered on the sabbath, when they would not fight.

Into this crisis the author introduces the priestly family of Mattathias and his sons Judas (whose epithet Maccabeus, "the hammer," gives rise to the name Maccabees), Jonathan, and Simon as the deliverers of Judea. Fearing that the Seleucids would kill all observant Jews and that the Hellenizers would destroy Judaism, Judas Maccabeus and his men mounted a campaign of armed resistance against both enemies. Using a combination of guerrilla warfare and diplomacy, they succeeded in recovering and purifying the Temple after Antiochus had defiled it, fortifying Jerusalem and securing a measure of independence for Judaea. The book is organized into sections that recount the history of each hero: Mattathias (ch 2); Judas Maccabeus (3.1-9.22); Jonathan (9.23-12.53); Simon (13.1-15.41); and John (16.1-24). By the end of the book three generations of Mattathias's family had fought for Judea's independence from the Seleucids and had established a ruling dynasty, which was called Hasmonean after their ancestor. The family of Mattathias is known as Hasmoneans from a traditional ancestor Hashmonia, not mentioned in 1 Maccabees but named in Josephus (Ant. 12.6.1). The name may be a rendering of Simeon, the grandfather of Mattathias. Joarib was first in the list of divisions of priests (1 Chr 24.7; Neh 11.10). Modein, in the hills on the road from Beth-horon, about 30 km (18 mi) northwest of Jerusalem. The Hasmoneans would remain in power until the Roman occupation in 63 BCE.

First Maccabees is written in the straightforward style of historical narrative filled with realistic detail. Scholars consider it the most reliable historical resource for the study of the Maccabean revolt. The author used both Jerusalem archives and Seleucid annals as sources; diplomatic correspondence and royal edicts are cited fourteen times in the book. Oral traditions of Jewish history probably supplemented written sources. Following the conventions of both biblical and
Hellenistic historiography, the author placed eloquent speeches in the mouths of major characters at critical points in the narrative. These compositions provide the reader with clues to some of the important religious themes in the book. The author used the Jewish scriptures as a literary model and consultant backdrop for his story. The book is organized in the manner of the historical books of the Hebrew Bible, which tend to mark periods in Israel's history by the deaths of divinely appointed deliverers (Josh 1.1; Judg 1.1; 2 Sam 1.17; 1 Kings 11.41-43). In 1 Maccabees the reader is clearly guided by refrains signaling the peaceful passing of leadership from one member of the Hasmonean family to the next (2.69-0; 9.19-22; 13.25-30). There are no accounts of miraculous interventions, but the author believes that God was working through the Maccabees, as he did through the deliverers in Israel (5.62; cf. Judg 2.16; 6.14).

Frequent allusions to Israel's history and the use of biblical vocabulary guide the reader to see Mattathias and his sons as heirs of biblical heroes. Mattathias is portrayed in language that evokes the stories of Phineas (2.23-26; Num 25.6-9) and Jacob (2.49-70; Gen 49), while Judas is likened to Jonathan son of Saul (3.16-22; 1 Sam 14.6) and to Solomon (4.52-58; 1 Kings 8). Even a simple phrase like "he tore down their altars" (5.68) evokes the story of Gideon (Judg 6.25) and the commands of Moses (Deut 7.5; 12.3). The use of anachronistic terms like "Philistines" and "Israel" link the Maccabean battles with the times of Joshua and David. The most overt guide for the reader is the set of ten poetic pieces scattered throughout the narrative. Their vocabulary and style evoke the poetry of ancient Israel, especially the Psalms, and their allusions often bring to mind the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. Like the poetry in the narratives of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Ex 15; 1 Sam 2; 2 Sam 1; 2 Sam 22), they provide the reader with theological commentary on the action of the story. In short, the author has woven scriptural allusions into the history of the Maccabean revolt.

The work was written between the rule of John Hyrcanus I, introduced at the end of the book 134-104 BCE), and Pompey's conquest of Rome in 63 BCE. Josephus used it as a source when he began his *Jewish Antiquities* in about 75 CE. The earliest extant manuscripts are from the
fourth and fifth centuries CE in Greek and Latin. Scholars since the time of Jerome have noticed that the Greek of 1 Maccabees reads like a translation from Hebrew, almost certainly the book's original language.

1 Maccabees

[1 Maccabees 1]
Introduction; Summary of history from Alexander to Antiochus IV

1 After Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian, who came from the land of Kittim, had defeated King Darius of the Persians and the Medes, he succeeded him as king. (He had previously become king of Greece.) 2 He fought many battles, conquered strongholds, and put to death the kings of the earth. 3 He advanced to the ends of the earth, and plundered many nations. When the earth became quiet before him, he was exalted, and his heart was lifted up. 4 He gathered a very strong army and ruled over countries, nations, and princes, and they became tributary to him.

5 After this he fell sick and perceived that he was dying. 6 So he summoned his most honored officers, who had been brought up with him from youth, and divided his kingdom among them while he was still alive. 7 And after Alexander had reigned twelve years, he died.

8 Then his officers began to rule, each in his own place. 9 They all put on crowns after his death, and so did their descendants after them for many years; and they caused many evils on the earth.

10 From them came forth a sinful root, Antiochus Epiphanes, son of King Antiochus; he had been a hostage in Rome. He began to reign in the one hundred thirty-seventh year of the kingdom of the Greeks.
Conflicts over Hellenization

11 In those days certain renegades came out from Israel and misled many, saying, "Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles around us, for since we separated from them many disasters have come upon us." 12 This proposal pleased them, 13 and some of the people eagerly went to the king, who authorized them to observe the ordinances of the Gentiles. 14 So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, 15 and removed the marks of circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant. They joined with the Gentiles and sold themselves to do evil.

Antiochus invades Egypt and Palestine

16 When Antiochus saw that his kingdom was established, he determined to become king of the land of Egypt, in order that he might reign over both kingdoms. 17 So he invaded Egypt with a strong force, with chariots and elephants and cavalry and with a large fleet. 18 He engaged King Ptolemy of Egypt in battle, and Ptolemy turned and fled before him, and many were wounded and fell. 19 They captured the fortified cities in the land of Egypt, and he plundered the land of Egypt.

20 After subduing Egypt, Antiochus returned in the one hundred forty-third year. He went up against Israel and came to Jerusalem with a strong force. 21 He arrogantly entered the sanctuary and took the golden altar, the lampstand for the light, and all its utensils. 22 He took also the table for the bread of the Presence, the cups for drink offerings, the bowls, the golden censers, the curtain, the crowns, and the gold decoration on the front of the temple; he stripped it all off. 23 He took the silver and the gold, and the costly vessels; he took also the hidden treasures that he found. 24 Taking them all, he went into his own land.

He shed much blood,
and spoke with great arrogance.
25 Israel mourned deeply in every community,
rulers and elders groaned,
young women and young men became faint,
the beauty of the women faded.

27 Every bridegroom took up the lament;
she who sat in the bridal chamber was mourning.

28 Even the land trembled for its inhabitants,
and all the house of Jacob was clothed with shame.

29 Two years later the king sent to the cities of Judah a chief collector of tribute, and he came to Jerusalem with a large force. 30 Deceitfully he spoke peaceable words to them, and they believed him; but he suddenly fell upon the city, dealt it a severe blow, and destroyed many people of Israel. 31 He plundered the city, burned it with fire, and tore down its houses and its surrounding walls. 32 They took captive the women and children, and seized the livestock. 33 Then they fortified the city of David with a great strong wall and strong towers, and it became their citadel. 34 They stationed there a sinful people, men who were renegades. These strengthened their position; 35 they stored up arms and food, and collecting the spoils of Jerusalem they stored them there, and became a great menace,

36 for the citadel became an ambush against the sanctuary,
an evil adversary of Israel at all times.

37 On every side of the sanctuary they shed innocent blood;
they even defiled the sanctuary.

38 Because of them the residents of Jerusalem fled;
she became a dwelling of strangers;
she became strange to her offspring,
and her children forsook her.

39 Her sanctuary became desolate like a desert;
her feasts were turned into mourning,
hersabbaths into a reproach,
her honor into contempt.

40 Her dishonor now grew as great as her glory;
her exaltation was turned into mourning.
Desecration of the Temple

41 Then the king wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, 42 and that all should give up their particular customs. 43 All the Gentiles accepted the command of the king. Many even from Israel gladly adopted his religion; they sacrificed to idols and profaned the sabbath. 44 And the king sent letters by messengers to Jerusalem and the towns of Judah; he directed them to follow customs strange to the land, 45 to forbid burnt offerings and sacrifices and drink offerings in the sanctuary, to profane sabbaths and festivals, 46 to defile the sanctuary and the priests, 47 to build altars and sacred precincts and shrines for idols, to sacrifice swine and other unclean animals, 48 and to leave their sons uncircumcised. They were to make themselves abominable by everything unclean and profane, 49 so that they would forget the law and change all the ordinances. 50 He added, "And whoever does not obey the command of the king shall die."

51 In such words he wrote to his whole kingdom. He appointed inspectors over all the people and commanded the towns of Judah to offer sacrifice, town by town. 52 Many of the people, everyone who forsook the law, joined them, and they did evil in the land; 53 they drove Israel into hiding in every place of refuge they had.

54 Now on the fifteenth day of Chislev, in the one hundred forty-fifth year, they erected a desolating sacrilege on the altar of burnt offering. They also built altars in the surrounding towns of Judah, 55 and offered incense at the doors of the houses and in the streets. 56 The books of the law that they found they tore to pieces and burned with fire. 57 Anyone found possessing the book of the covenant, or anyone who adhered to the law, was condemned to death by decree of the king. 58 They kept using violence against Israel, against those who were found month after month in the towns. 59 On the twenty-fifth day of the month they offered sacrifice on the altar that was on top of the altar of burnt offering. 60 According to the decree, they put to death the women who had their children circumcised, 61 and their families and those who circumcised them; and they hung the infants from their mothers' necks.
62 But many in Israel stood firm and were resolved in their hearts not to eat unclean food. 63 They chose to die rather than to be defiled by food or to profane the holy covenant; and they did die. 64 Very great wrath came upon Israel.

[1 Maccabees 2]

Revolt of Mattathias

1 In those days Mattathias son of John son of Simeon, a priest of the family of Joarib, moved from Jerusalem and settled in Modein. 2 He had five sons, John surnamed Gaddi, 3 Simon called Thassi, 4 Judas called Maccabeus, 5 Eleazar called Avaran, and Jonathan called Apphus. 6 He saw the blasphemies being committed in Judah and Jerusalem, 7 and said, "Alas! Why was I born to see this, the ruin of my people, the ruin of the holy city, and to live there when it was given over to the enemy, the sanctuary given over to aliens?

8 Her temple has become like a person without honor; her glorious vessels have been carried into exile. Her infants have been killed in her streets, her youths by the sword of the foe.

9 What nation has not inherited her palaces and has not seized her spoils?

10 All her adornment has been taken away; no longer free, she has become a slave.

11 And see, our holy place, our beauty, and our glory have been laid waste; the Gentiles have profaned them.

12 Why should we live any longer?"

13 Then Mattathias and his sons tore their clothes, put on sackcloth, and mourned greatly.

14 The king's officers who were enforcing the apostasy came to the town of Modein to make them offer sacrifice. 16 Many from Israel came to them; and Mattathias and his sons were assembled. 17 Then the king's officers spoke to Mattathias as follows: "You are a leader,
honored and great in this town, and supported by sons and brothers. 18 Now be the first to come and do what the king commands, as all the Gentiles and the people of Judah and those that are left in Jerusalem have done. Then you and your sons will be numbered among the Friends of the king, and you and your sons will be honored with silver and gold and many gifts."

19 But Mattathias answered and said in a loud voice: "Even if all the nations that live under the rule of the king obey him, and have chosen to obey his commandments, everyone of them abandoning the religion of their ancestors, 20 I and my sons and my brothers will continue to live by the covenant of our ancestors. 21 Far be it from us to desert the law and the ordinances. 22 We will not obey the king's words by turning aside from our religion to the right hand or to the left."

23 When he had finished speaking these words, a Jew came forward in the sight of all to offer sacrifice on the altar in Modein, according to the king's command. 24 When Mattathias saw it, he burned with zeal and his heart was stirred. He gave vent to righteous anger; he ran and killed him on the altar. 25 At the same time he killed the king's officer who was forcing them to sacrifice, and he tore down the altar. 26 Thus he burned with zeal for the law, just as Phinehas did against Zimri son of Salu.

27 Then Mattathias cried out in the town with a loud voice, saying: "Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!" 28 Then he and his sons fled to the hills and left all that they had in the town.

29 At that time many who were seeking righteousness and justice went down to the wilderness to live there, 30 they, their sons, their wives, and their livestock, because troubles pressed heavily upon them. 31 And it was reported to the king's officers, and to the troops in Jerusalem the city of David, that those who had rejected the king's command had gone down to the hiding places in the wilderness. 32 Many pursued them, and overtook them; they encamped opposite them and prepared for battle against them on the sabbath day. 33 They said to them, "Enough of this! Come out and do what the king commands, and you
will live." 34 But they said, "We will not come out, nor will we do what the king commands and so profane the sabbath day." 35 Then the enemy quickly attacked them. 36 But they did not answer them or hurl a stone at them or block up their hiding places, 37 for they said, "Let us all die in our innocence; heaven and earth testify for us that you are killing us unjustly." 38 So they attacked them on the sabbath, and they died, with their wives and children and livestock, to the number of a thousand persons.

39 When Mattathias and his friends learned of it, they mourned for them deeply. 40 And all said to their neighbors: "If we all do as our kindred have done and refuse to fight with the Gentiles for our lives and for our ordinances, they will quickly destroy us from the earth." 41 So they made this decision that day: "Let us fight against anyone who comes to attack us on the sabbath day; let us not all die as our kindred died in their hiding places."

42 Then there united with them a company of Hasideans, mighty warriors of Israel, all who offered themselves willingly for the law. 43 And all who became fugitives to escape their troubles joined them and reinforced them. 44 They organized an army, and struck down sinners in their anger and renegades in their wrath; the survivors fled to the Gentiles for safety. 45 And Mattathias and his friends went around and tore down the altars; 46 they forcibly circumcised all the uncircumcised boys that they found within the borders of Israel. 47 They hunted down the arrogant, and the work prospered in their hands. 48 They rescued the law out of the hands of the Gentiles and kings, and they never let the sinner gain the upper hand.

**Last Words of Mattathias**

49 Now the days drew near for Mattathias to die, and he said to his sons: "Arrogance and scorn have now become strong; it is a time of ruin and furious anger. 50 Now, my children, show zeal for the law, and give your lives for the covenant of our ancestors."
51 "Remember the deeds of the ancestors, which they did in their generations; and you will receive great honor and an everlasting name. 52 Was not Abraham found faithful when tested, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness? 53 Joseph in the time of his distress kept the commandment, and became lord of Egypt. 54 Phinehas our ancestor, because he was deeply zealous, received the covenant of everlasting priesthood. 55 Joshua, because he fulfilled the command, became a judge in Israel. 56 Caleb, because he testified in the assembly, received an inheritance in the land. 57 David, because he was merciful, inherited the throne of the kingdom forever. 58 Elijah, because of great zeal for the law, was taken up into heaven. 59 Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael believed and were saved from the flame. 60 Daniel, because of his innocence, was delivered from the mouth of the lions.

61 "And so observe, from generation to generation, that none of those who put their trust in him will lack strength. 62 Do not fear the words of sinners, for their splendor will turn into dung and worms. 63 Today they will be exalted, but tomorrow they will not be found, because they will have returned to the dust, and their plans will have perished. 64 My children, be courageous and grow strong in the law, for by it you will gain honor.

65 "Here is your brother Simeon who, I know, is wise in counsel; always listen to him; he shall be your father. 66 Judas Maccabeus has been a mighty warrior from his youth; he shall command the army for you and fight the battle against the peoples. 67 You shall rally around you all who observe the law, and avenge the wrong done to your people. 68 Pay back the Gentiles in full, and obey the commands of the law."

69 Then he blessed them, and was gathered to his ancestors. 70 He died in the one hundred forty-sixth year and was buried in the tomb of his ancestors at Modein. And all Israel mourned for him with great lamentation.
[1 Maccabees 3]
Defeat of Apollonius

1 Then his son Judas, who was called Maccabeus, took command in his place. 2 All his brothers and all who had joined his father helped him; they gladly fought for Israel.

3 He extended the glory of his people. 
   Like a giant he put on his breastplate; 
   he bound on his armor of war and waged battles, 
   protecting the camp by his sword.
4 He was like a lion in his deeds, 
   like a lion's cub roaring for prey.
5 He searched out and pursued those who broke the law; 
   he burned those who troubled his people.
6 Lawbreakers shrank back for fear of him; 
   all the evildoers were confounded; 
   and deliverance prospered by his hand.
7 He embittered many kings, 
   but he made Jacob glad by his deeds, 
   and his memory is blessed forever.
8 He went through the cities of Judah; 
   he destroyed the ungodly out of the land; 
   thus he turned away wrath from Israel.
9 He was renowned to the ends of the earth; 
   he gathered in those who were perishing.

10 Apollonius now gathered together Gentiles and a large force from Samaria to fight against Israel. 11 When Judas learned of it, he went out to meet him, and he defeated and killed him. Many were wounded and fell, and the rest fled. 12 Then they seized their spoils; and Judas took the sword of Apollonius, and used it in battle the rest of his life.

Battle of Beth-horon

13 When Seron, the commander of the Syrian army, heard that Judas had gathered a large company, including a body of faithful soldiers who stayed with him and went out to battle, 14 he said, "I will make a
name for myself and win honor in the kingdom. I will make war on Judas and his companions, who scorn the king's command." 15 Once again a strong army of godless men went up with him to help him, to take vengeance on the Israelites.

16 When he approached the ascent of Beth-horon, Judas went out to meet him with a small company. 17 But when they saw the army coming to meet them, they said to Judas, "How can we, few as we are, fight against so great and so strong a multitude? And we are faint, for we have eaten nothing today." 18 Judas replied, "It is easy for many to be hemmed in by few, for in the sight of Heaven there is no difference between saving by many or by few. 19 It is not on the size of the army that victory in battle depends, but strength comes from Heaven. 20 They come against us in great insolence and lawlessness to destroy us and our wives and our children, and to despoil us; 21 but we fight for our lives and our laws. 22 He himself will crush them before us; as for you, do not be afraid of them."

23 When he finished speaking, he rushed suddenly against Seron and his army, and they were crushed before him. 24 They pursued them down the descent of Beth-horon to the plain; eight hundred of them fell, and the rest fled into the land of the Philistines. 25 Then Judas and his brothers began to be feared, and terror fell on the Gentiles all around them. 26 His fame reached the king, and the Gentiles talked of the battles of Judas.

Campaigns of Lysias

27 When King Antiochus heard these reports, he was greatly angered; and he sent and gathered all the forces of his kingdom, a very strong army. 28 He opened his coffers and gave a year's pay to his forces, and ordered them to be ready for any need. 29 Then he saw that the money in the treasury was exhausted, and that the revenues from the country were small because of the dissension and disaster that he had caused in the land by abolishing the laws that had existed from the earliest days. 30 He feared that he might not have such funds as he had before for his expenses and for the gifts that he used to give more lavishly than preceding kings. 31 He was greatly perplexed in mind;
then he determined to go to Persia and collect the revenues from those regions and raise a large fund.

32 He left Lysias, a distinguished man of royal lineage, in charge of the king's affairs from the river Euphrates to the borders of Egypt. 33 Lysias was also to take care of his son Antiochus until he returned. 34 And he turned over to Lysias half of his forces and the elephants, and gave him orders about all that he wanted done. As for the residents of Judea and Jerusalem, 35 Lysias was to send a force against them to wipe out and destroy the strength of Israel and the remnant of Jerusalem; he was to banish the memory of them from the place, 36 settle aliens in all their territory, and distribute their land by lot. 37 Then the king took the remaining half of his forces and left Antioch his capital in the one hundred and forty-seventh year. He crossed the Euphrates river and went through the upper provinces.

Preparations for Battle

38 Lysias chose Ptolemy son of Dorymenes, and Nicanor and Gorgias, able men among the Friends of the king, 39 and sent with them forty thousand infantry and seven thousand cavalry to go into the land of Judah and destroy it, as the king had commanded. 40 So they set out with their entire force, and when they arrived they encamped near Emmaus in the plain. 41 When the traders of the region heard what was said to them, they took silver and gold in immense amounts, and fetters, and went to the camp to get the Israelites for slaves. And forces from Syria and the land of the Philistines joined with them.

42 Now Judas and his brothers saw that misfortunes had increased and that the forces were encamped in their territory. They also learned what the king had commanded to do to the people to cause their final destruction. 43 But they said to one another, "Let us restore the ruins of our people, and fight for our people and the sanctuary." 44 So the congregation assembled to be ready for battle, and to pray and ask for mercy and compassion.
45 Jerusalem was uninhabited like a wilderness; 
not one of her children went in or out. 
The sanctuary was trampled down, 
and aliens held the citadel; 
it was a lodging place for the Gentiles. 
Joy was taken from Jacob; 
the flute and the harp ceased to play.

46 Then they gathered together and went to Mizpah, opposite Jerusalem, because Israel formerly had a place of prayer in Mizpah. 47 They fasted that day, put on sackcloth and sprinkled ashes on their heads, and tore their clothes. 48 And they opened the book of the law to inquire into those matters about which the Gentiles consulted the likenesses of their gods. 49 They also brought the vestments of the priesthood and the first fruits and the tithes, and they stirred up the nazirites who had completed their days; 50 and they cried aloud to Heaven, saying,
"What shall we do with these? 
Where shall we take them?
51 Your sanctuary is trampled down and profaned, 
and your priests mourn in humiliation.
52 Here the Gentiles are assembled against us to destroy us; 
you know what they plot against us.
53 How will we be able to withstand them, 
if you do not help us?"

54 Then they sounded the trumpets and gave a loud shout. 55 After this Judas appointed leaders of the people, in charge of thousands and hundreds and fifties and tens. 56 Those who were building houses, or were about to be married, or were planting a vineyard, or were fainthearted, he told to go home again, according to the law. 57 Then the army marched out and encamped to the south of Emmaus.

58 And Judas said, "Arm yourselves and be courageous. Be ready early in the morning to fight with these Gentiles who have assembled against us to destroy us and our sanctuary. 59 It is better for us to die in battle than to see the misfortunes of our nation and of the sanctuary. 60 But as his will in heaven may be, so shall he do."
The Battle at Emmaus
[1 Maccabees 4]

1 Now Gorgias took five thousand infantry and one thousand picked cavalry, and this division moved out by night to fall upon the camp of the Jews and attack them suddenly. Men from the citadel were his guides. 3 But Judas heard of it, and he and his warriors moved out to attack the king's force in Emmaus while the division was still absent from the camp. 5 When Gorgias entered the camp of Judas by night, he found no one there, so he looked for them in the hills, because he said, "These men are running away from us."

6 At daybreak Judas appeared in the plain with three thousand men, but they did not have armor and swords such as they desired. 7 And they saw the camp of the Gentiles, strong and fortified, with cavalry all around it; and these men were trained in war. 8 But Judas said to those who were with him, "Do not fear their numbers or be afraid when they charge. 9 Remember how our ancestors were saved at the Red Sea, when Pharaoh with his forces pursued them. 10 And now, let us cry to Heaven, to see whether he will favor us and remember his covenant with our ancestors and crush this army before us today. 11 Then all the Gentiles will know that there is one who redeems and saves Israel."

12 When the foreigners looked up and saw them coming against them, 13 they went out from their camp to battle. Then the men with Judas blew their trumpets and engaged in battle. The Gentiles were crushed, and fled into the plain, and all those in the rear fell by the sword. They pursued them to Gazara, and to the plains of Idumea, and to Azotus and Jamnia; and three thousand of them fell. 16 Then Judas and his force turned back from pursuing them, and he said to the people, "Do not be greedy for plunder, for there is a battle before us; 18 Gorgias and his force are near us in the hills. But stand now against our enemies and fight them, and afterward seize the plunder boldly."

19 Just as Judas was finishing this speech, a detachment appeared, coming out of the hills. 20 They saw that their army had been put to flight, and that the Jews were burning the camp, for the smoke that
was seen showed what had happened. 21 When they perceived this, they were greatly frightened, and when they also saw the army of Judas drawn up in the plain for battle, 22 they all fled into the land of the Philistines. 23 Then Judas returned to plunder the camp, and they seized a great amount of gold and silver, and cloth dyed blue and sea purple, and great riches. 24 On their return they sang hymns and praises to Heaven — "For he is good, for his mercy endures forever." 25 Thus Israel had a great deliverance that day.

First Campaign of Lysias

26 Those of the foreigners who escaped went and reported to Lysias all that had happened. 27 When he heard it, he was perplexed and discouraged, for things had not happened to Israel as he had intended, nor had they turned out as the king had ordered. 28 But the next year he mustered sixty thousand picked infantry and five thousand cavalry to subdue them. 29 They came into Idumea and encamped at Beth-zur, and Judas met them with ten thousand men.

30 When he saw that their army was strong, he prayed, saying, "Blessed are you, O Savior of Israel, who crushed the attack of the mighty warrior by the hand of your servant David, and gave the camp of the Philistines into the hands of Jonathan son of Saul, and of the man who carried his armor. 31 Hem in this army by the hand of your people Israel, and let them be ashamed of their troops and their cavalry. 32 Fill them with cowardice; melt the boldness of their strength; let them tremble in their destruction. 33 Strike them down with the sword of those who love you, and let all who know your name praise you with hymns."

34 Then both sides attacked, and there fell of the army of Lysias five thousand men; they fell in action. 35 When Lysias saw the rout of his troops and observed the boldness that inspired those of Judas, and how ready they were either to live or to die nobly, he withdrew to Antioch and enlisted mercenaries in order to invade Judea again with an even larger army.
Rededication of the Temple

36 Then Judas and his brothers said, "See, our enemies are crushed; let us go up to cleanse the sanctuary and dedicate it." 37 So all the army assembled and went up to Mount Zion. 38 There they saw the sanctuary desolate, the altar profaned, and the gates burned. In the courts they saw bushes sprung up as in a thicket, or as on one of the mountains. They saw also the chambers of the priests in ruins. 39 Then they tore their clothes and mourned with great lamentation; they sprinkled themselves with ashes 40 and fell face down on the ground. And when the signal was given with the trumpets, they cried out to Heaven.

41 Then Judas detailed men to fight against those in the citadel until he had cleansed the sanctuary. 42 He chose blameless priests devoted to the law, 43 and they cleansed the sanctuary and removed the defiled stones to an unclean place. 44 They deliberated what to do about the altar of burnt offering, which had been profaned. 45 And they thought it best to tear it down, so that it would not be a lasting shame to them that the Gentiles had defiled it. So they tore down the altar, 46 and stored the stones in a convenient place on the temple hill until a prophet should come to tell what to do with them. 47 Then they took unhewn stones, as the law directs, and built a new altar like the former one. 48 They also rebuilt the sanctuary and the interior of the temple, and consecrated the courts. 49 They made new holy vessels, and brought the lampstand, the altar of incense, and the table into the temple. 50 Then they offered incense on the altar and lit the lamps on the lampstand, and these gave light in the temple. 51 They placed the bread on the table and hung up the curtains. Thus they finished all the work they had undertaken.

52 Early in the morning on the twenty-fifth day of the ninth month, which is the month of Chislev, in the one hundred forty-eighth year, 53 they rose and offered sacrifice, as the law directs, on the new altar of burnt offering that they had built. 54 At the very season and on the very day that the Gentiles had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs and harps and lutes and cymbals. 55 All the people fell on their faces and worshiped and blessed Heaven, who had prospered them. 56 So
they celebrated the dedication of the altar for eight days, and joyfully offered burnt offerings; they offered a sacrifice of well-being and a thanksgiving offering. 57 They decorated the front of the temple with golden crowns and small shields; they restored the gates and the chambers for the priests, and fitted them with doors. 58 There was very great joy among the people, and the disgrace brought by the Gentiles was removed.

59 Then Judas and his brothers and all the assembly of Israel determined that every year at that season the days of dedication of the altar should be observed with joy and gladness for eight days, beginning with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Chislev.

60 At that time they fortified Mount Zion with high walls and strong towers all around, to keep the Gentiles from coming and trampling them down as they had done before. 61 Judas stationed a garrison there to guard it; he also fortified Beth-zur to guard it, so that the people might have a stronghold that faced Idumea.

[1 Maccabees 5]

Judas gathers Jews into Judea

1 When the Gentiles all around heard that the altar had been rebuilt and the sanctuary dedicated as it was before, they became very angry, 2 and they determined to destroy the descendants of Jacob who lived among them. So they began to kill and destroy among the people. 3 But Judas made war on the descendants of Esau in Idumea, at Akrabattene, because they kept lying in wait for Israel. He dealt them a heavy blow and humbled them and despoiled them. 4 He also remembered the wickedness of the sons of Baean, who were a trap and a snare to the people and ambushed them on the highways. 5 They were shut up by him in their towers; and he encamped against them, vowed their complete destruction, and burned with fire their towers and all who were in them. 6 Then he crossed over to attack the Ammonites, where he found a strong band and many people, with Timothy as their leader. 7 He engaged in many battles with them, and they were crushed before him; he struck them down. 8 He also took Jazer and its villages; then he returned to Judea.
9 Now the Gentiles in Gilead gathered together against the Israelites who lived in their territory, and planned to destroy them. But they fled to the stronghold of Dathema, 10 and sent to Judas and his brothers a letter that said, "The Gentiles around us have gathered together to destroy us. 11 They are preparing to come and capture the stronghold to which we have fled, and Timothy is leading their forces. 12 Now then, come and rescue us from their hands, for many of us have fallen, 13 and all our kindred who were in the land of Tob have been killed; the enemy have captured their wives and children and goods, and have destroyed about a thousand persons there."

14 While the letter was still being read, other messengers, with their garments torn, came from Galilee and made a similar report; 15 they said that the people of Ptolemais and Tyre and Sidon, and all Galilee of the Gentiles, had gathered together against them "to annihilate us." 16 When Judas and the people heard these messages, a great assembly was called to determine what they should do for their kindred who were in distress and were being attacked by enemies. 17 Then Judas said to his brother Simon, "Choose your men and go and rescue your kindred in Galilee; Jonathan my brother and I will go to Gilead." 18 But he left Joseph, son of Zechariah, and Azariah, a leader of the people, with the rest of the forces, in Judea to guard it; 19 and he gave them this command, "Take charge of this people, but do not engage in battle with the Gentiles until we return." 20 Then three thousand men were assigned to Simon to go to Galilee, and eight thousand to Judas for Gilead.

21 So Simon went to Galilee and fought many battles against the Gentiles, and the Gentiles were crushed before him. 22 He pursued them to the gate of Ptolemais; as many as three thousand of the Gentiles fell, and he despoiled them. 23 Then he took the Jews of Galilee and Arbatta, with their wives and children, and all they possessed, and led them to Judea with great rejoicing.

24 Judas Maccabeus and his brother Jonathan crossed the Jordan and made three days' journey into the wilderness. 25 They encountered the Nabateans, who met them peaceably and told them all that had happened to their kindred in Gilead: 26 "Many of them have been shut
up in Bozrah and Bosor, in Alema and Chaspho, Maked and Carnaim" — all these towns were strong and large — 27 "and some have been shut up in the other towns of Gilead; the enemy are getting ready to attack the strongholds tomorrow and capture and destroy all these people in a single day."

28 Then Judas and his army quickly turned back by the wilderness road to Bozrah; and he took the town, and killed every male by the edge of the sword; 29 He left the place at night, and they went all the way to the stronghold of Dathema. 30 At dawn they looked out and saw a large company, which could not be counted, carrying ladders and engines of war to capture the stronghold, and attacking the Jews within. 31 So Judas saw that the battle had begun and that the cry of the town went up to Heaven, with trumpets and loud shouts, 32 and he said to the men of his forces, "Fight today for your kindred!" 33 Then he came up behind them in three companies, who sounded their trumpets and cried aloud in prayer. 34 And when the army of Timothy realized that it was Maccabeus, they fled before him, and he dealt them a heavy blow. As many as eight thousand of them fell that day.

35 Next he turned aside to Maapha, and fought against it and took it; and he killed every male in it, plundered it, and burned it with fire. 36 From there he marched on and took Chaspho, Maked, and Bosor, and the other towns of Gilead.

37 After these things Timothy gathered another army and encamped opposite Raphon, on the other side of the stream. 38 Judas sent men to spy out the camp, and they reported to him, "All the Gentiles around us have gathered to him; it is a very large force. 39 They also have hired Arabs to help them, and they are encamped across the stream, ready to come and fight against you." And Judas went to meet them.

40 Now as Judas and his army drew near to the stream of water, Timothy said to the officers of his forces, "If he crosses over to us first, we will not be able to resist him, for he will surely defeat us. 41 But if he shows fear and camps on the other side of the river, we will cross over to him and defeat him." 42 When Judas approached the stream of
water, he stationed the officers of the army at the stream and gave them this command, "Permit no one to encamp, but make them all enter the battle." Then he crossed over against them first, and the whole army followed him. All the Gentiles were defeated before him, and they threw away their arms and fled into the sacred precincts at Carnaim. But he took the town and burned the sacred precincts with fire, together with all who were in them. Thus Carnaim was conquered; they could stand before Judas no longer.

Then Judas gathered together all the Israelites in Gilead, the small and the great, with their wives and children and goods, a very large company, to go to the land of Judah. So they came to Ephron. This was a large and very strong town on the road, and they could not go around it to the right or to the left; they had to go through it. But the people of the town shut them out and blocked up the gates with stones.

Judas sent them this friendly message, "Let us pass through your land to get to our land. No one will do you harm; we will simply pass by on foot." But they refused to open to him. Then Judas ordered proclamation to be made to the army that all should encamp where they were. So the men of the forces encamped, and he fought against the town all that day and all the night, and the town was delivered into his hands. He destroyed every male by the edge of the sword, and razed and plundered the town. Then he passed through the town over the bodies of the dead.

Then they crossed the Jordan into the large plain before Beth-shan. Judas kept rallying the laggards and encouraging the people all the way until he came to the land of Judah. So they went up to Mount Zion with joy and gladness, and offered burnt offerings, because they had returned in safety; not one of them had fallen.

Now while Judas and Jonathan were in Gilead and their brother Simon was in Galilee before Ptolemais, Joseph son of Zechariah, and Azariah, the commanders of the forces, heard of their brave deeds and of the heroic war they had fought. So they said, "Let us also make a name for ourselves; let us go and make war on the Gentiles around
us." 58 So they issued orders to the men of the forces that were with them and marched against Jamnia. 59 Gorgias and his men came out of the town to meet them in battle. 60 Then Joseph and Azariah were routed, and were pursued to the borders of Judea; as many as two thousand of the people of Israel fell that day. 61 Thus the people suffered a great rout because, thinking to do a brave deed, they did not listen to Judas and his brothers. 62 But they did not belong to the family of those men through whom deliverance was given to Israel.

63 The man Judas and his brothers were greatly honored in all Israel and among all the Gentiles, wherever their name was heard. 64 People gathered to them and praised them.

65 Then Judas and his brothers went out and fought the descendants of Esau in the land to the south. He struck Hebron and its villages and tore down its strongholds and burned its towers on all sides. 66 Then he marched off to go into the land of the Philistines, and passed through Marisa. 67 On that day some priests, who wished to do a brave deed, fell in battle, for they went out to battle unwisely. 68 But Judas turned aside to Azotus in the land of the Philistines; he tore down their altars, and the carved images of their gods he burned with fire; he plundered the towns and returned to the land of Judah.

[1 Maccabees 6]
Death of Antiochus Epiphanes IV and accession of Antiochus V

1 King Antiochus was going through the upper provinces when he heard that Elymais in Persia was a city famed for its wealth in silver and gold. 2 Its temple was very rich, containing golden shields, breastplates, and weapons left there by Alexander son of Philip, the Macedonian king who first reigned over the Greeks. 3 So he came and tried to take the city and plunder it, but he could not because his plan had become known to the citizens 4 and they withstood him in battle. So he fled and in great disappointment left there to return to Babylon.

5 Then someone came to him in Persia and reported that the armies that had gone into the land of Judah had been routed; 6 that Lysias had gone first with a strong force, but had turned and fled before the
Jews; that the Jews had grown strong from the arms, supplies, and abundant spoils that they had taken from the armies they had cut down; 7 that they had torn down the abomination that he had erected on the altar in Jerusalem; and that they had surrounded the sanctuary with high walls as before, and also Beth-zur, his town.

8 When the king heard this news, he was astounded and badly shaken. He took to his bed and became sick from disappointment, because things had not turned out for him as he had planned. 9 He lay there for many days, because deep disappointment continually gripped him, and he realized that he was dying. 10 So he called all his Friends and said to them, "Sleep has departed from my eyes and I am downhearted with worry. 11 I said to myself, 'To what distress I have come! And into what a great flood I now am plunged! For I was kind and beloved in my power.' 12 But now I remember the wrong I did in Jerusalem. I seized all its vessels of silver and gold, and I sent to destroy the inhabitants of Judah without good reason. 13 I know that it is because of this that these misfortunes have come upon me; here I am, perishing of bitter disappointment in a strange land."

14 Then he called for Philip, one of his Friends, and made him ruler over all his kingdom. 15 He gave him the crown and his robe and the signet, so that he might guide his son Antiochus and bring him up to be king. 16 Thus King Antiochus died there in the one hundred forty-ninth year. 17 When Lysias learned that the king was dead, he set up Antiochus the king's son to reign. Lysias had brought him up from boyhood; he named him Eupator.

**Attack on the citadel and second battle at Beth-zur**

18 Meanwhile the garrison in the citadel kept hemming Israel in around the sanctuary. They were trying in every way to harm them and strengthen the Gentiles. 19 Judas therefore resolved to destroy them, and assembled all the people to besiege them. 20 They gathered together and besieged the citadel in the one hundred fiftieth year; and he built siege towers and other engines of war. 21 But some of the garrison escaped from the siege and some of the ungodly Israelites joined them. 22 They went to the king and said, "How long will you fail
to do justice and to avenge our kindred? 23 We were happy to serve your father, to live by what he said, and to follow his commands. 24 For this reason the sons of our people besieged the citadel and became hostile to us; moreover, they have put to death as many of us as they have caught, and they have seized our inheritances. 25 It is not against us alone that they have stretched out their hands; they have also attacked all the lands on their borders. 26 And see, today they have encamped against the citadel in Jerusalem to take it; they have fortified both the sanctuary and Beth-zur; 27 unless you quickly prevent them, they will do still greater things, and you will not be able to stop them."

28 The king was enraged when he heard this. He assembled all his Friends, the commanders of his forces and those in authority. 29 Mercenary forces also came to him from other kingdoms and from islands of the seas. 30 The number of his forces was one hundred thousand foot soldiers, twenty thousand horsemen, and thirty-two elephants accustomed to war. 31 They came through Idumea and encamped against Beth-zur, and for many days they fought and built engines of war; but the Jews sallied out and burned these with fire, and fought courageously.

32 Then Judas marched away from the citadel and encamped at Beth-zechariah, opposite the camp of the king. 33 Early in the morning the king set out and took his army by a forced march along the road to Beth-zechariah, and his troops made ready for battle and sounded their trumpets. 34 They offered the elephants the juice of grapes and mulberries, to arouse them for battle. 35 They distributed the animals among the phalanxes; with each elephant they stationed a thousand men armed with coats of mail, and with brass helmets on their heads; and five hundred picked horsemen were assigned to each beast. 36 These took their position beforehand wherever the animal was; wherever it went, they went with it, and they never left it. 37 On the elephants were wooden towers, strong and covered; they were fastened on each animal by special harness, and on each were four armed men who fought from there, and also its Indian driver. 38 The rest of the cavalry were stationed on either side, on the two flanks of the army, to harass the enemy while being themselves protected by the
phalanxes. 39 When the sun shone on the shields of gold and brass, the hills were ablaze with them and gleamed like flaming torches.

40 Now a part of the king's army was spread out on the high hills, and some troops were on the plain, and they advanced steadily and in good order. 41 All who heard the noise made by their multitude, by the marching of the multitude and the clanking of their arms, trembled, for the army was very large and strong. 42 But Judas and his army advanced to the battle, and six hundred of the king's army fell. 43 Now Eleazar, called Avaran, saw that one of the animals was equipped with royal armor. It was taller than all the others, and he supposed that the king was on it. 44 So he gave his life to save his people and to win for himself an everlasting name. 45 He courageously ran into the midst of the phalanx to reach it; he killed men right and left, and they parted before him on both sides. 46 He got under the elephant, stabbed it from beneath, and killed it; but it fell to the ground upon him and he died. 47 When the Jews saw the royal might and the fierce attack of the forces, they turned away in flight.

48 The soldiers of the king's army went up to Jerusalem against them, and the king encamped in Judea and at Mount Zion. 49 He made peace with the people of Beth-zur, and they evacuated the town because they had no provisions there to withstand a siege, since it was a sabbatical year for the land. 50 So the king took Beth-zur and stationed a guard there to hold it. 51 Then he encamped before the sanctuary for many days. He set up siege towers, engines of war to throw fire and stones, machines to shoot arrows, and catapults. 52 The Jews also made engines of war to match theirs, and fought for many days. 53 But they had no food in storage, because it was the seventh year; those who had found safety in Judea from the Gentiles had consumed the last of the stores. 54 Only a few men were left in the sanctuary; the rest scattered to their own homes, for the famine proved too much for them.

Lysias makes peace

55 Then Lysias heard that Philip, whom King Antiochus while still living had appointed to bring up his son Antiochus to be king, 56 had
returned from Persia and Media with the forces that had gone with the king, and that he was trying to seize control of the government. 57 So he quickly gave orders to withdraw, and said to the king, to the commanders of the forces, and to the troops, "Daily we grow weaker, our food supply is scant, the place against which we are fighting is strong, and the affairs of the kingdom press urgently on us. 58 Now then let us come to terms with these people, and make peace with them and with all their nation. 59 Let us agree to let them live by their laws as they did before; for it was on account of their laws that we abolished that they became angry and did all these things."

60 The speech pleased the king and the commanders, and he sent to the Jews an offer of peace, and they accepted it. 61 So the king and the commanders gave them their oath. On these conditions the Jews evacuated the stronghold. 62 But when the king entered Mount Zion and saw what a strong fortress the place was, he broke the oath he had sworn and gave orders to tear down the wall all around. 63 Then he set off in haste and returned to Antioch. He found Philip in control of the city, but he fought against him, and took the city by force.

[1 Maccabees 7]
Demetrius I becomes king

1 In the one hundred fifty-first year Demetrius son of Seleucus set out from Rome, sailed with a few men to a town by the sea, and there began to reign. 2 As he was entering the royal palace of his ancestors, the army seized Antiochus and Lysias to bring them to him. 3 But when this act became known to him, he said, "Do not let me see their faces!" 4 So the army killed them, and Demetrius took his seat on the throne of his kingdom.

Alcimus as high priest

5 Then there came to him all the renegade and godless men of Israel; they were led by Alcimus, who wanted to be high priest. 6 They brought to the king this accusation against the people: "Judas and his brothers have destroyed all your Friends, and have driven us out of our land. 7 Now then send a man whom you trust; let him go and see all
the ruin that Judas has brought on us and on the land of the king, and let him punish them and all who help them."

8 So the king chose Bacchides, one of the king's Friends, governor of the province Beyond the River; he was a great man in the kingdom and was faithful to the king. 9 He sent him, and with him he sent the ungodly Alcimus, whom he made high priest; and he commanded him to take vengeance on the Israelites. 10 So they marched away and came with a large force into the land of Judah; and he sent messengers to Judas and his brothers with peaceable but treacherous words. 11 But they paid no attention to their words, for they saw that they had come with a large force.

12 Then a group of scribes appeared in a body before Alcimus and Bacchides to ask for just terms. 13 The Hasideans were first among the Israelites to seek peace from them, 14 for they said, "A priest of the line of Aaron has come with the army, and he will not harm us." 15 Alcimus spoke peaceable words to them and swore this oath to them, "We will not seek to injure you or your friends." 16 So they trusted him; but he seized sixty of them and killed them in one day, in accordance with the word that was written,

17 "The flesh of your faithful ones and their blood
    they poured out all around Jerusalem,
    and there was no one to bury them."

18 Then the fear and dread of them fell on all the people, for they said, "There is no truth or justice in them, for they have violated the agreement and the oath that they swore."

19 Then Bacchides withdrew from Jerusalem and encamped in Beth-zait. And he sent and seized many of the men who had deserted to him, and some of the people, and killed them and threw them into a great pit. 20 He placed Alcimus in charge of the country and left with him a force to help him; then Bacchides went back to the king.

21 Alcimus struggled to maintain his high priesthood, 22 and all who were troubling their people joined him. They gained control of the land of Judah and did great damage in Israel. 23 And Judas saw all the
wrongs that Alcimus and those with him had done among the Israelites; it was more than the Gentiles had done. 24 So Judas went out into all the surrounding parts of Judea, taking vengeance on those who had deserted and preventing those in the city from going out into the country. 25 When Alcimus saw that Judas and those with him had grown strong, and realized that he could not withstand them, he returned to the king and brought malicious charges against them.

Defeat of Nicanor

26 Then the king sent Nicanor, one of his honored princes, who hated and detested Israel, and he commanded him to destroy the people. 27 So Nicanor came to Jerusalem with a large force, and treacherously sent to Judas and his brothers this peaceable message, 28 "Let there be no fighting between you and me; I shall come with a few men to see you face to face in peace."

29 So he came to Judas, and they greeted one another peaceably; but the enemy were preparing to kidnap Judas. 30 It became known to Judas that Nicanor had come to him with treacherous intent, and he was afraid of him and would not meet him again. 31 When Nicanor learned that his plan had been disclosed, he went out to meet Judas in battle near Caphar-salama. 32 About five hundred of the army of Nicanor fell, and the rest fled into the city of David.

33 After these events Nicanor went up to Mount Zion. Some of the priests from the sanctuary and some of the elders of the people came out to greet him peaceably and to show him the burnt offering that was being offered for the king. 34 But he mocked them and derided them and defiled them and spoke arrogantly, 35 and in anger he swore this oath, "Unless Judas and his army are delivered into my hands this time, then if I return safely I will burn up this house." And he went out in great anger. 36 At this the priests went in and stood before the altar and the temple; they wept and said,
37 "You chose this house to be called by your name,  
and to be for your people a house of prayer and supplication.  
38 Take vengeance on this man and on his army,  
and let them fall by the sword;  
remember their blasphemies,  
and let them live no longer."

39 Now Nicanor went out from Jerusalem and encamped in Beth-horon, and the Syrian army joined him. 40 Judas encamped in Adasa with three thousand men. Then Judas prayed and said, 41 "When the messengers from the king spoke blasphemy, your angel went out and struck down one hundred eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians. 42 So also crush this army before us today; let the rest learn that Nicanor has spoken wickedly against the sanctuary, and judge him according to this wickedness."

43 So the armies met in battle on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. The army of Nicanor was crushed, and he himself was the first to fall in the battle. 44 When his army saw that Nicanor had fallen, they threw down their arms and fled. 45 The Jews pursued them a day's journey, from Adasa as far as Gazara, and as they followed they kept sounding the battle call on the trumpets. 46 People came out of all the surrounding villages of Judea, and they outflanked the enemy and drove them back to their pursuers, so that they all fell by the sword; not even one of them was left. 47 Then the Jews seized the spoils and the plunder; they cut off Nicanor's head and the right hand that he had so arrogantly stretched out, and brought them and displayed them just outside Jerusalem. 48 The people rejoiced greatly and celebrated that day as a day of great gladness. 49 They decreed that this day should be celebrated each year on the thirteenth day of Adar. 50 So the land of Judah had rest for a few days.

[1 Maccabees 8]  
Treaty with Rome

1 Now Judas heard of the fame of the Romans, that they were very strong and were well-disposed toward all who made an alliance with them, that they pledged friendship to those who came to them, 2 and
that they were very strong. He had been told of their wars and of the brave deeds that they were doing among the Gauls, how they had defeated them and forced them to pay tribute, 3 and what they had done in the land of Spain to get control of the silver and gold mines there, 4 and how they had gained control of the whole region by their planning and patience, even though the place was far distant from them. They also subdued the kings who came against them from the ends of the earth, until they crushed them and inflicted great disaster on them; the rest paid them tribute every year. 5 They had crushed in battle and conquered Philip, and King Perseus of the Macedonians, and the others who rose up against them. 6 They also had defeated Antiochus the Great, king of Asia, who went to fight against them with one hundred twenty elephants and with cavalry and chariots and a very large army. He was crushed by them; 7 they took him alive and decreed that he and those who would reign after him should pay a heavy tribute and give hostages and surrender some of their best provinces, 8 the countries of India, Media, and Lydia. These they took from him and gave to King Eumenes. 9 The Greeks planned to come and destroy them, 10 but this became known to them, and they sent a general against the Greeks and attacked them. Many of them were wounded and fell, and the Romans took captive their wives and children; they plundered them, conquered the land, tore down their strongholds, and enslaved them to this day. 11 The remaining kingdoms and islands, as many as ever opposed them, they destroyed and enslaved; 12 but with their friends and those who rely on them they have kept friendship. They have subdued kings far and near, and as many as have heard of their fame have feared them. 13 Those whom they wish to help and to make kings, they make kings, and those whom they wish they depose; and they have been greatly exalted. 14 Yet for all this not one of them has put on a crown or worn purple as a mark of pride, 15 but they have built for themselves a senate chamber, and every day three hundred twenty senators constantly deliberate concerning the people, to govern them well. 16 They trust one man each year to rule over them and to control all their land; they all heed the one man, and there is no envy or jealousy among them.
17 So Judas chose Eupolemus son of John son of Accos, and Jason son of Eleazar, and sent them to Rome to establish friendship and alliance, 18 and to free themselves from the yoke; for they saw that the kingdom of the Greeks was enslaving Israel completely. 19 They went to Rome, a very long journey; and they entered the senate chamber and spoke as follows: 20 "Judas, who is also called Maccabeus, and his brothers and the people of the Jews have sent us to you to establish alliance and peace with you, so that we may be enrolled as your allies and friends." 21 The proposal pleased them, 22 and this is a copy of the letter that they wrote in reply, on bronze tablets, and sent to Jerusalem to remain with them there as a memorial of peace and alliance:

23 "May all go well with the Romans and with the nation of the Jews at sea and on land forever, and may sword and enemy be far from them. 24 If war comes first to Rome or to any of their allies in all their dominion, 25 the nation of the Jews shall act as their allies wholeheartedly, as the occasion may indicate to them. 26 To the enemy that makes war they shall not give or supply grain, arms, money, or ships, just as Rome has decided; and they shall keep their obligations without receiving any return. 27 In the same way, if war comes first to the nation of the Jews, the Romans shall willingly act as their allies, as the occasion may indicate to them. 28 And to their enemies there shall not be given grain, arms, money, or ships, just as Rome has decided; and they shall keep these obligations and do so without deceit. 29 Thus on these terms the Romans make a treaty with the Jewish people. 30 If after these terms are in effect both parties shall determine to add or delete anything, they shall do so at their discretion, and any addition or deletion that they may make shall be valid.

31 "Concerning the wrongs that King Demetrius is doing to them, we have written to him as follows, 'Why have you made your yoke heavy on our friends and allies the Jews? 32 If now they appeal again for help against you, we will defend their rights and fight you on sea and on land.'"
Death of Judas

1 When Demetrius heard that Nicanor and his army had fallen in battle, he sent Bacchides and Alcimus into the land of Judah a second time, and with them the right wing of the army. 2 They went by the road that leads to Gilgal and encamped against Mesaloth in Arbela, and they took it and killed many people. 3 In the first month of the one hundred fifty-second year they encamped against Jerusalem; 4 then they marched off and went to Berea with twenty thousand foot soldiers and two thousand cavalry.

5 Now Judas was encamped in Elasa, and with him were three thousand picked men. 6 When they saw the huge number of the enemy forces, they were greatly frightened, and many slipped away from the camp, until no more than eight hundred of them were left.

7 When Judas saw that his army had slipped away and the battle was imminent, he was crushed in spirit, for he had no time to assemble them. 8 He became faint, but he said to those who were left, "Let us get up and go against our enemies. We may have the strength to fight them." 9 But they tried to dissuade him, saying, "We do not have the strength. Let us rather save our own lives now, and let us come back with our kindred and fight them; we are too few." 10 But Judas said, "Far be it from us to do such a thing as to flee from them. If our time has come, let us die bravely for our kindred, and leave no cause to question our honor."

11 Then the army of Bacchides marched out from the camp and took its stand for the encounter. The cavalry was divided into two companies, and the slingers and the archers went ahead of the army, as did all the chief warriors. 12 Bacchides was on the right wing. Flanked by the two companies, the phalanx advanced to the sound of the trumpets; and the men with Judas also blew their trumpets. 13 The earth was shaken by the noise of the armies, and the battle raged from morning until evening.
14 Judas saw that Bacchides and the strength of his army were on the right; then all the stouthearted men went with him, 15 and they crushed the right wing, and he pursued them as far as Mount Azotus. 16 When those on the left wing saw that the right wing was crushed, they turned and followed close behind Judas and his men. 17 The battle became desperate, and many on both sides were wounded and fell. 18 Judas also fell, and the rest fled.

19 Then Jonathan and Simon took their brother Judas and buried him in the tomb of their ancestors at Modein, 20 and wept for him. All Israel made great lamentation for him; they mourned many days and said,

21 "How is the mighty fallen, the savior of Israel!"

22 Now the rest of the acts of Judas, and his wars and the brave deeds that he did, and his greatness, have not been recorded, but they were very many.

Jonathan becomes leader and defeats Bacchides

23 After the death of Judas, the renegades emerged in all parts of Israel; all the wrongdoers reappeared. 24 In those days a very great famine occurred, and the country went over to their side. 25 Bacchides chose the godless and put them in charge of the country. 26 They made inquiry and searched for the friends of Judas, and brought them to Bacchides, who took vengeance on them and made sport of them. 27 So there was great distress in Israel, such as had not been since the time that prophets ceased to appear among them.

28 Then all the friends of Judas assembled and said to Jonathan, 29 "Since the death of your brother Judas there has been no one like him to go against our enemies and Bacchides, and to deal with those of our nation who hate us. 30 Now therefore we have chosen you today to take his place as our ruler and leader, to fight our battle." 31 So Jonathan accepted the leadership at that time in place of his brother Judas.
32 When Bacchides learned of this, he tried to kill him. 33 But Jonathan and his brother Simon and all who were with him heard of it, and they fled into the wilderness of Tekoa and camped by the water of the pool of Asphar. 34 Bacchides found this out on the sabbath day, and he with all his army crossed the Jordan.

35 So Jonathan sent his brother as leader of the multitude and begged the Nabateans, who were his friends, for permission to store with them the great amount of baggage that they had. 36 But the family of Jambri from Medeba came out and seized John and all that he had, and left with it.

37 After these things it was reported to Jonathan and his brother Simon, "The family of Jambri are celebrating a great wedding, and are conducting the bride, a daughter of one of the great nobles of Canaan, from Nadabath with a large escort." 38 Remembering how their brother John had been killed, they went up and hid under cover of the mountain. 39 They looked out and saw a tumultuous procession with a great amount of baggage; and the bridegroom came out with his friends and his brothers to meet them with tambourines and musicians and many weapons. 40 Then they rushed on them from the ambush and began killing them. Many were wounded and fell, and the rest fled to the mountain; and the Jews took all their goods. 41 So the wedding was turned into mourning and the voice of their musicians into a funeral dirge. 42 After they had fully avenged the blood of their brother, they returned to the marshes of the Jordan.

43 When Bacchides heard of this, he came with a large force on the sabbath day to the banks of the Jordan. 44 And Jonathan said to those with him, "Let us get up now and fight for our lives, for today things are not as they were before. 45 For look! the battle is in front of us and behind us; the water of the Jordan is on this side and on that, with marsh and thicket; there is no place to turn. 46 Cry out now to Heaven that you may be delivered from the hands of our enemies." 47 So the battle began, and Jonathan stretched out his hand to strike Bacchides, but he eluded him and went to the rear. 48 Then Jonathan and the men with him leaped into the Jordan and swam across to the other
side, and the enemy did not cross the Jordan to attack them. 49 And about one thousand of Bacchides' men fell that day.

50 Then Bacchides returned to Jerusalem and built strong cities in Judea: the fortress in Jericho, and Emmaus, and Beth-horon, and Bethel, and Timnath, and Pharathon, and Tephon, with high walls and gates and bars. 51 And he placed garrisons in them to harass Israel. 52 He also fortified the town of Beth-zur, and Gazara, and the citadel, and in them he put troops and stores of food. 53 And he took the sons of the leading men of the land as hostages and put them under guard in the citadel at Jerusalem.

54 In the one hundred and fifty-third year, in the second month, Alcimus gave orders to tear down the wall of the inner court of the sanctuary. He tore down the work of the prophets! 55 But he only began to tear it down, for at that time Alcimus was stricken and his work was hindered; his mouth was stopped and he was paralyzed, so that he could no longer say a word or give commands concerning his house. 56 And Alcimus died at that time in great agony. 57 When Bacchides saw that Alcimus was dead, he returned to the king, and the land of Judah had rest for two years.

58 Then all the lawless plotted and said, "See! Jonathan and his men are living in quiet and confidence. So now let us bring Bacchides back, and he will capture them all in one night." 59 And they went and consulted with him. 60 He started to come with a large force, and secretly sent letters to all his allies in Judea, telling them to seize Jonathan and his men; but they were unable to do it, because their plan became known. 61 And Jonathan's men seized about fifty of the men of the country who were leaders in this treachery, and killed them.

62 Then Jonathan with his men, and Simon, withdrew to Bethbasi in the wilderness; he rebuilt the parts of it that had been demolished, and they fortified it. 63 When Bacchides learned of this, he assembled all his forces, and sent orders to the men of Judea. 64 Then he came and encamped against Bethbasi; he fought against it for many days and made machines of war.
But Jonathan left his brother Simon in the town, while he went out into the country; and he went with only a few men. He struck down Odomera and his kindred and the people of Phasiron in their tents. Then he began to attack and went into battle with his forces; and Simon and his men sallied out from the town and set fire to the machines of war. They fought with Bacchides, and he was crushed by them. They pressed him very hard, for his plan and his expedition had been in vain. So he was very angry at the renegades who had counseled him to come into the country, and he killed many of them. Then he decided to go back to his own land.

When Jonathan learned of this, he sent ambassadors to him to make peace with him and obtain release of the captives. He agreed, and did as he said; and he swore to Jonathan that he would not try to harm him as long as he lived. He restored to him the captives whom he had taken previously from the land of Judah; then he turned and went back to his own land, and did not come again into their territory. Thus the sword ceased from Israel. Jonathan settled in Michmash and began to judge the people; and he destroyed the godless out of Israel.

In the one hundred sixtieth year Alexander Epiphanes, son of Antiochus, landed and occupied Ptolemais. They welcomed him, and there he began to reign. When King Demetrius heard of it, he assembled a very large army and marched out to meet him in battle. Demetrius sent Jonathan a letter in peaceable words to honor him; for he said to himself, "Let us act first to make peace with him before he makes peace with Alexander against us, for he will remember all the wrongs that we did to him and to his brothers and his nation." So Demetrius gave him authority to recruit troops, to equip them with arms, and to become his ally; and he commanded that the hostages in the citadel should be released to him.

Then Jonathan came to Jerusalem and read the letter in the hearing of all the people and of those in the citadel. They were greatly alarmed when they heard that the king had given him authority to
recruit troops. 9 But those in the citadel released the hostages to Jonathan, and he returned them to their parents.

10 And Jonathan took up residence in Jerusalem and began to rebuild and restore the city. 11 He directed those who were doing the work to build the walls and encircle Mount Zion with squared stones, for better fortification; and they did so.

12 Then the foreigners who were in the strongholds that Bacchides had built fled; 13 all of them left their places and went back to their own lands. 14 Only in Beth-zur did some remain who had forsaken the law and the commandments, for it served as a place of refuge.

15 Now King Alexander heard of all the promises that Demetrius had sent to Jonathan, and he heard of the battles that Jonathan and his brothers had fought, of the brave deeds that they had done, and of the troubles that they had endured. 16 So he said, "Shall we find another such man? Come now, we will make him our friend and ally." 17 And he wrote a letter and sent it to him, in the following words:

Jonathan Becomes High Priest

18 "King Alexander to his brother Jonathan, greetings. 19 We have heard about you, that you are a mighty warrior and worthy to be our friend. 20 And so we have appointed you today to be the high priest of your nation; you are to be called the king's Friend and you are to take our side and keep friendship with us." He also sent him a purple robe and a golden crown.

21 So Jonathan put on the sacred vestments in the seventh month of the one hundred sixtieth year, at the festival of booths, and he recruited troops and equipped them with arms in abundance. 22 When Demetrius heard of these things he was distressed and said, 23 "What is this that we have done? Alexander has gotten ahead of us in forming a friendship with the Jews to strengthen himself. 24 I also will write them words of encouragement and promise them honor and gifts, so that I may have their help." 25 So he sent a message to them in the following words:
Demetrius's offer to the Jews; his defeat

"King Demetrius to the nation of the Jews, greetings. 26 Since you have kept your agreement with us and have continued your friendship with us, and have not sided with our enemies, we have heard of it and rejoiced. 27 Now continue still to keep faith with us, and we will repay you with good for what you do for us. 28 We will grant you many immunities and give you gifts.

29 "I now free you and exempt all the Jews from payment of tribute and salt tax and crown levies, 30 and instead of collecting the third of the grain and the half of the fruit of the trees that I should receive, I release them from this day and henceforth. I will not collect them from the land of Judah or from the three districts added to it from Samaria and Galilee, from this day and for all time. 31 Jerusalem and its environs, its tithes and its revenues, shall be holy and free from tax. 32 I release also my control of the citadel in Jerusalem and give it to the high priest, so that he may station in it men of his own choice to guard it. 33 And everyone of the Jews taken as a captive from the land of Judah into any part of my kingdom, I set free without payment; and let all officials cancel also the taxes on their livestock.

34 "All the festivals and sabbaths and new moons and appointed days, and the three days before a festival and the three after a festival — let them all be days of immunity and release for all the Jews who are in my kingdom. 35 No one shall have authority to exact anything from them or annoy any of them about any matter.

36 "Let Jews be enrolled in the king's forces to the number of thirty thousand men, and let the maintenance be given them that is due to all the forces of the king. 37 Let some of them be stationed in the great strongholds of the king, and let some of them be put in positions of trust in the kingdom. Let their officers and leaders be of their own number, and let them live by their own laws, just as the king has commanded in the land of Judah.
“As for the three districts that have been added to Judea from the country of Samaria, let them be annexed to Judea so that they may be considered to be under one ruler and obey no other authority than the high priest. 39 Ptolemais and the land adjoining it I have given as a gift to the sanctuary in Jerusalem, to meet the necessary expenses of the sanctuary. 40 I also grant fifteen thousand shekels of silver yearly out of the king's revenues from appropriate places. 41 And all the additional funds that the government officials have not paid as they did in the first years, they shall give from now on for the service of the temple. 42 Moreover, the five thousand shekels of silver that my officials have received every year from the income of the services of the temple, this too is canceled, because it belongs to the priests who minister there. 43 And all who take refuge at the temple in Jerusalem, or in any of its precincts, because they owe money to the king or are in debt, let them be released and receive back all their property in my kingdom.

44 "Let the cost of rebuilding and restoring the structures of the sanctuary be paid from the revenues of the king. 45 And let the cost of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and fortifying it all around, and the cost of rebuilding the walls in Judea, also be paid from the revenues of the king."

46 When Jonathan and the people heard these words, they did not believe or accept them, because they remembered the great wrongs that Demetrius had done in Israel and how much he had oppressed them. 47 They favored Alexander, because he had been the first to speak peaceable words to them, and they remained his allies all his days.

48 Now King Alexander assembled large forces and encamped opposite Demetrius. 49 The two kings met in battle, and the army of Demetrius fled, and Alexander pursued him and defeated them. 50 He pressed the battle strongly until the sun set, and on that day Demetrius fell.
Alexander's relations with Egypt and Judea

51 Then Alexander sent ambassadors to Ptolemy king of Egypt with the following message: 52 "Since I have returned to my kingdom and have taken my seat on the throne of my ancestors, and established my rule — for I crushed Demetrius and gained control of our country; 53 I met him in battle, and he and his army were crushed by us, and we have taken our seat on the throne of his kingdom — 54 now therefore let us establish friendship with one another; give me now your daughter as my wife, and I will become your son-in-law, and will make gifts to you and to her in keeping with your position."

55 Ptolemy the king replied and said, "Happy was the day on which you returned to the land of your ancestors and took your seat on the throne of their kingdom. 56 And now I will do for you as you wrote, but meet me at Ptolemais, so that we may see one another, and I will become your father-in-law, as you have said."

57 So Ptolemy set out from Egypt, he and his daughter Cleopatra, and came to Ptolemais in the one hundred sixty-second year. 58 King Alexander met him, and Ptolemy gave him his daughter Cleopatra in marriage, and celebrated her wedding at Ptolemais with great pomp, as kings do.

59 Then King Alexander wrote to Jonathan to come and meet him. 60 So he went with pomp to Ptolemais and met the two kings; he gave them and their Friends silver and gold and many gifts, and found favor with them. 61 A group of malcontents from Israel, renegades, gathered together against him to accuse him; but the king paid no attention to them. 62 The king gave orders to take off Jonathan's garments and to clothe him in purple, and they did so. 63 The king also seated him at his side; and he said to his officers, "Go out with him into the middle of the city and proclaim that no one is to bring charges against him about any matter, and let no one annoy him for any reason." 64 When his accusers saw the honor that was paid him, in accord with the proclamation, and saw him clothed in purple, they all fled. 65 Thus the king honored him and enrolled him among his chief Friends, and made
him general and governor of the province. 66 And Jonathan returned to Jerusalem in peace and gladness.

**Victories of Jonathan**

67 In the one hundred sixty-fifth year Demetrius son of Demetrius came from Crete to the land of his ancestors. 68 When King Alexander heard of it, he was greatly distressed and returned to Antioch. 69 And Demetrius appointed Apollonius the governor of Coelesyria, and he assembled a large force and encamped against Jamnia. Then he sent the following message to the high priest Jonathan:

70 "You are the only one to rise up against us, and I have fallen into ridicule and disgrace because of you. Why do you assume authority against us in the hill country? 71 If you now have confidence in your forces, come down to the plain to meet us, and let us match strength with each other there, for I have with me the power of the cities. 72 Ask and learn who I am and who the others are that are helping us. People will tell you that you cannot stand before us, for your ancestors were twice put to flight in their own land. 73 And now you will not be able to withstand my cavalry and such an army in the plain, where there is no stone or pebble, or place to flee."

74 When Jonathan heard the words of Apollonius, his spirit was aroused. He chose ten thousand men and set out from Jerusalem, and his brother Simon met him to help him. 75 He encamped before Joppa, but the people of the city closed its gates, for Apollonius had a garrison in Joppa. 76 So they fought against it, and the people of the city became afraid and opened the gates, and Jonathan gained possession of Joppa.

77 When Apollonius heard of it, he mustered three thousand cavalry and a large army, and went to Azotus as though he were going farther. At the same time he advanced into the plain, for he had a large troop of cavalry and put confidence in it. 78 Jonathan pursued him to Azotus, and the armies engaged in battle. 79 Now Apollonius had secretly left a thousand cavalry behind them. 80 Jonathan learned that there was an ambush behind him, for they surrounded his army.
and shot arrows at his men from early morning until late afternoon. But his men stood fast, as Jonathan had commanded, and the enemy's horses grew tired.

82 Then Simon brought forward his force and engaged the phalanx in battle (for the cavalry was exhausted); they were overwhelmed by him and fled, and the cavalry was dispersed in the plain. They fled to Azotus and entered Beth-dagon, the temple of their idol, for safety. 84 But Jonathan burned Azotus and the surrounding towns and plundered them; and the temple of Dagon, and those who had taken refuge in it, he burned with fire. 85 The number of those who fell by the sword, with those burned alive, came to eight thousand.

86 Then Jonathan left there and encamped against Askalon, and the people of the city came out to meet him with great pomp.

87 He and those with him then returned to Jerusalem with a large amount of booty. 88 When King Alexander heard of these things, he honored Jonathan still more; 89 and he sent to him a golden buckle, such as it is the custom to give to the King's Kinsmen. He also gave himEkron and all its environs as his possession.

[1 Maccabees 11]
Invasion of Ptolemy VI and victory of Demetrius II

1 Then the king of Egypt gathered great forces, like the sand by the seashore, and many ships; and he tried to get possession of Alexander's kingdom by trickery and add it to his own kingdom. 2 He set out for Syria with peaceable words, and the people of the towns opened their gates to him and went to meet him, for King Alexander had commanded them to meet him, since he was Alexander's father-in-law. 3 But when Ptolemy entered the towns he stationed forces as a garrison in each town.

4 When he approached Azotus, they showed him the burnt-out temple of Dagon, and Azotus and its suburbs destroyed, and the corpses lying about, and the charred bodies of those whom Jonathan had burned in the war, for they had piled them in heaps along his route. 5 They also
told the king what Jonathan had done, to throw blame on him; but the king kept silent. 6 Jonathan met the king at Joppa with pomp, and they greeted one another and spent the night there. 7 And Jonathan went with the king as far as the river called Eleutherus; then he returned to Jerusalem.

8 So King Ptolemy gained control of the coastal cities as far as Seleucia by the sea, and he kept devising wicked designs against Alexander. 9 He sent envoys to King Demetrius, saying, "Come, let us make a covenant with each other, and I will give you in marriage my daughter who was Alexander's wife, and you shall reign over your father's kingdom. 10 I now regret that I gave him my daughter, for he has tried to kill me." 11 He threw blame on Alexander because he coveted his kingdom. 12 So he took his daughter away from him and gave her to Demetrius. He was estranged from Alexander, and their enmity became manifest.

13 Then Ptolemy entered Antioch and put on the crown of Asia. Thus he put two crowns on his head, the crown of Egypt and that of Asia. 14 Now King Alexander was in Cilicia at that time, because the people of that region were in revolt. 15 When Alexander heard of it, he came against him in battle. Ptolemy marched out and met him with a strong force, and put him to flight. 16 So Alexander fled into Arabia to find protection there, and King Ptolemy was triumphant. 17 Zabdiel the Arab cut off the head of Alexander and sent it to Ptolemy. 18 But King Ptolemy died three days later, and his troops in the strongholds were killed by the inhabitants of the strongholds. 19 So Demetrius became king in the one hundred sixty-seventh year.

20 In those days Jonathan assembled the Judeans to attack the citadel in Jerusalem, and he built many engines of war to use against it. 21 But certain renegades who hated their nation went to the king and reported to him that Jonathan was besieging the citadel. 22 When he heard this he was angry, and as soon as he heard it he set out and came to Ptolemais; and he wrote Jonathan not to continue the siege, but to meet him for a conference at Ptolemais as quickly as possible.
23 When Jonathan heard this, he gave orders to continue the siege. He chose some of the elders of Israel and some of the priests, and put himself in danger, 24 for he went to the king at Ptolemais, taking silver and gold and clothing and numerous other gifts. And he won his favor. 25 Although certain renegades of his nation kept making complaints against him, 26 the king treated him as his predecessors had treated him; he exalted him in the presence of all his Friends. 27 He confirmed him in the high priesthood and in as many other honors as he had formerly had, and caused him to be reckoned among his chief Friends. 28 Then Jonathan asked the king to free Judea and the three districts of Samaria from tribute, and promised him three hundred talents. 29 The king consented, and wrote a letter to Jonathan about all these things; its contents were as follows:

30 "King Demetrius to his brother Jonathan and to the nation of the Jews, greetings. 31 This copy of the letter that we wrote concerning you to our kinsman Lasthenes we have written to you also, so that you may know what it says. 32 'King Demetrius to his father Lasthenes, greetings. 33 We have determined to do good to the nation of the Jews, who are our friends and fulfill their obligations to us, because of the goodwill they show toward us. 34 We have confirmed as their possession both the territory of Judea and the three districts of Aphairema and Lydda and Rathamin; the latter, with all the region bordering them, were added to Judea from Samaria. To all those who offer sacrifice in Jerusalem we have granted release from the royal taxes that the king formerly received from them each year, from the crops of the land and the fruit of the trees. 35 And the other payments henceforth due to us of the tithes, and the taxes due to us, and the salt pits and the crown taxes due to us — from all these we shall grant them release. 36 And not one of these grants shall be canceled from this time on forever. 37 Now therefore take care to make a copy of this, and let it be given to Jonathan and put up in a conspicuous place on the holy mountain.'"

Jonathan's aid to Demetrius

38 When King Demetrius saw that the land was quiet before him and that there was no opposition to him, he dismissed all his troops, all of
them to their own homes, except the foreign troops that he had recruited from the islands of the nations. So all the troops who had served under his predecessors hated him. 39 A certain Trypho had formerly been one of Alexander's supporters; he saw that all the troops were grumbling against Demetrius. So he went to Imalkue the Arab, who was bringing up Antiochus, the young son of Alexander, 40 and insistently urged him to hand Antiochus over to him, to become king in place of his father. He also reported to Imalkue what Demetrius had done and told of the hatred that the troops of Demetrius had for him; and he stayed there many days.

41 Now Jonathan sent to King Demetrius the request that he remove the troops of the citadel from Jerusalem, and the troops in the strongholds; for they kept fighting against Israel. 42 And Demetrius sent this message back to Jonathan: "Not only will I do these things for you and your nation, but I will confer great honor on you and your nation, if I find an opportunity. 43 Now then you will do well to send me men who will help me, for all my troops have revolted." 44 So Jonathan sent three thousand stalwart men to him at Antioch, and when they came to the king, the king rejoiced at their arrival.

45 Then the people of the city assembled within the city, to the number of a hundred and twenty thousand, and they wanted to kill the king. 46 But the king fled into the palace. Then the people of the city seized the main streets of the city and began to fight. 47 So the king called the Jews to his aid, and they all rallied around him and then spread out through the city; and they killed on that day about one hundred thousand. 48 They set fire to the city and seized a large amount of spoil on that day, and saved the king. 49 When the people of the city saw that the Jews had gained control of the city as they pleased, their courage failed and they cried out to the king with this entreaty: 50 "Grant us peace, and make the Jews stop fighting against us and our city." 51 And they threw down their arms and made peace. So the Jews gained glory in the sight of the king and of all the people in his kingdom, and they returned to Jerusalem with a large amount of spoil.
52 So King Demetrius sat on the throne of his kingdom, and the land was quiet before him.

Estrangement of Demetrius and Jonathan

53 But he broke his word about all that he had promised; he became estranged from Jonathan and did not repay the favors that Jonathan had done him, but treated him very harshly.

54 After this Trypho returned, and with him the young boy Antiochus who began to reign and put on the crown. 55 All the troops that Demetrius had discharged gathered around him; they fought against Demetrius, and he fled and was routed. 56 Trypho captured the elephants and gained control of Antioch. 57 Then the young Antiochus wrote to Jonathan, saying, "I confirm you in the high priesthood and set you over the four districts and make you one of the king’s Friends."
58 He also sent him gold plate and a table service, and granted him the right to drink from gold cups and dress in purple and wear a gold buckle. 59 He appointed Jonathan's brother Simon governor from the Ladder of Tyre to the borders of Egypt.

60 Then Jonathan set out and traveled beyond the river and among the towns, and all the army of Syria gathered to him as allies. When he came to Askalon, the people of the city met him and paid him honor. 61 From there he went to Gaza, but the people of Gaza shut him out. So he besieged it and burned its suburbs with fire and plundered them. 62 Then the people of Gaza pleaded with Jonathan, and he made peace with them, and took the sons of their rulers as hostages and sent them to Jerusalem. And he passed through the country as far as Damascus.

63 Then Jonathan heard that the officers of Demetrius had come to Kadesh in Galilee with a large army, intending to remove him from office. 64 He went to meet them, but left his brother Simon in the country. 65 Simon encamped before Beth-zur and fought against it for many days and hemmed it in. 66 Then they asked him to grant them terms of peace, and he did so. He removed them from there, took possession of the town, and set a garrison over it.
67 Jonathan and his army encamped by the waters of Gennesaret. Early in the morning they marched to the plain of Hazor, 68 and there in the plain the army of the foreigners met him; they had set an ambush against him in the mountains, but they themselves met him face to face. 69 Then the men in ambush emerged from their places and joined battle. 70 All the men with Jonathan fled; not one of them was left except Mattathias son of Absalom and Judas son of Chalphi, commanders of the forces of the army. 71 Jonathan tore his clothes, put dust on his head, and prayed. 72 Then he turned back to the battle against the enemy and routed them, and they fled. 73 When his men who were fleeing saw this, they returned to him and joined him in the pursuit as far as Kadesh, to their camp, and there they encamped. 74 As many as three thousand of the foreigners fell that day. And Jonathan returned to Jerusalem.

[1 Maccabees 12]
Alliances with the Romans and Spartans

1 Now when Jonathan saw that the time was favorable for him, he chose men and sent them to Rome to confirm and renew the friendship with them. 2 He also sent letters to the same effect to the Spartans and to other places. 3 So they went to Rome and entered the senate chamber and said, "The high priest Jonathan and the Jewish nation have sent us to renew the former friendship and alliance with them." 4 And the Romans gave them letters to the people in every place, asking them to provide for the envoys safe conduct to the land of Judah.

5 This is a copy of the letter that Jonathan wrote to the Spartans: 6 "The high priest Jonathan, the senate of the nation, the priests, and the rest of the Jewish people to their brothers the Spartans, greetings. 7 Already in time past a letter was sent to the high priest Onias from Arius, who was king among you, stating that you are our brothers, as the appended copy shows. 8 Onias welcomed the envoy with honor, and received the letter, which contained a clear declaration of alliance and friendship. 9 Therefore, though we have no need of these things, since we have as encouragement the holy books that are in our hands, 10 we have undertaken to send to renew our family ties and friendship
with you, so that we may not become estranged from you, for considerable time has passed since you sent your letter to us. 11 We therefore remember you constantly on every occasion, both at our festivals and on other appropriate days, at the sacrifices that we offer and in our prayers, as it is right and proper to remember brothers. 12 And we rejoice in your glory. 13 But as for ourselves, many trials and many wars have encircled us; the kings around us have waged war against us. 14 We were unwilling to annoy you and our other allies and friends with these wars, 15 for we have the help that comes from Heaven for our aid, and so we were delivered from our enemies, and our enemies were humbled. 16 We therefore have chosen Numenius son of Antiochus and Antipater son of Jason, and have sent them to Rome to renew our former friendship and alliance with them. 17 We have commanded them to go also to you and greet you and deliver to you this letter from us concerning the renewal of our family ties. 18 And now please send us a reply to this."

19 This is a copy of the letter that they sent to Onias: 20 "King Arius of the Spartans, to the high priest Onias, greetings. 21 It has been found in writing concerning the Spartans and the Jews that they are brothers and are of the family of Abraham. 22 And now that we have learned this, please write us concerning your welfare; 23 we on our part write to you that your livestock and your property belong to us, and ours belong to you. We therefore command that our envoys report to you accordingly."

Jonathan captured by Trypho

24 Now Jonathan heard that the commanders of Demetrius had returned, with a larger force than before, to wage war against him. 25 So he marched away from Jerusalem and met them in the region of Hamath, for he gave them no opportunity to invade his own country. 26 He sent spies to their camp, and they returned and reported to him that the enemy were being drawn up in formation to attack the Jews by night. 27 So when the sun had set, Jonathan commanded his troops to be alert and to keep their arms at hand so as to be ready all night for battle, and he stationed outposts around the camp. 28 When the enemy heard that Jonathan and his troops were prepared for battle,
they were afraid and were terrified at heart; so they kindled fires in their camp and withdrew. 29 But Jonathan and his troops did not know it until morning, for they saw the fires burning. 30 Then Jonathan pursued them, but he did not overtake them, for they had crossed the Eleutherus river. 31 So Jonathan turned aside against the Arabs who are called Zabadeans, and he crushed them and plundered them. 32 Then he broke camp and went to Damascus, and marched through all that region.

33 Simon also went out and marched through the country as far as Askalon and the neighboring strongholds. He turned aside to Joppa and took it by surprise, 34 for he had heard that they were ready to hand over the stronghold to those whom Demetrius had sent. And he stationed a garrison there to guard it.

35 When Jonathan returned he convened the elders of the people and planned with them to build strongholds in Judea, 36 to build the walls of Jerusalem still higher, and to erect a high barrier between the citadel and the city to separate it from the city, in order to isolate it so that its garrison could neither buy nor sell. 37 So they gathered together to rebuild the city; part of the wall on the valley to the east had fallen, and he repaired the section called Chaphenatha. 38 Simon also built Adida in the Shephelah; he fortified it and installed gates with bolts.

39 Then Trypho attempted to become king in Asia and put on the crown, and to raise his hand against King Antiochus. 40 He feared that Jonathan might not permit him to do so, but might make war on him, so he kept seeking to seize and kill him, and he marched out and came to Beth-shan. 41 Jonathan went out to meet him with forty thousand picked warriors, and he came to Beth-shan. 42 When Trypho saw that he had come with a large army, he was afraid to raise his hand against him. 43 So he received him with honor and commended him to all his Friends, and he gave him gifts and commanded his Friends and his troops to obey him as they would himself. 44 Then he said to Jonathan, "Why have you put all these people to so much trouble when we are not at war? 45 Dismiss them now to their homes and choose for yourself a few men to stay with you, and come with me to Ptolemais."
will hand it over to you as well as the other strongholds and the remaining troops and all the officials, and will turn around and go home. For that is why I am here."

46 Jonathan trusted him and did as he said; he sent away the troops, and they returned to the land of Judah. 47 He kept with himself three thousand men, two thousand of whom he left in Galilee, while one thousand accompanied him. 48 But when Jonathan entered Ptolemais, the people of Ptolemais closed the gates and seized him, and they killed with the sword all who had entered with him.

49 Then Trypho sent troops and cavalry into Galilee and the Great Plain to destroy all Jonathan's soldiers. 50 But they realized that Jonathan had been seized and had perished along with his men, and they encouraged one another and kept marching in close formation, ready for battle. 51 When their pursuers saw that they would fight for their lives, they turned back. 52 So they all reached the land of Judah safely, and they mourned for Jonathan and his companions and were in great fear; and all Israel mourned deeply. 53 All the nations around them tried to destroy them, for they said, "They have no leader or helper. Now therefore let us make war on them and blot out the memory of them from humankind."

[1 Maccabees 13]
Simon becomes leader; death of Jonathan

1 Simon heard that Trypho had assembled a large army to invade the land of Judah and destroy it, 2 and he saw that the people were trembling with fear. So he went up to Jerusalem, and gathering the people together 3 he encouraged them, saying to them, "You yourselves know what great things my brothers and I and the house of my father have done for the laws and the sanctuary; you know also the wars and the difficulties that my brothers and I have seen. 4 By reason of this all my brothers have perished for the sake of Israel, and I alone am left. 5 And now, far be it from me to spare my life in any time of distress, for I am not better than my brothers. 6 But I will avenge my nation and the sanctuary and your wives and children, for all the nations have gathered together out of hatred to destroy us."
7 The spirit of the people was rekindled when they heard these words, 8 and they answered in a loud voice, "You are our leader in place of Judas and your brother Jonathan. 9 Fight our battles, and all that you say to us we will do." 10 So he assembled all the warriors and hurried to complete the walls of Jerusalem, and he fortified it on every side. 11 He sent Jonathan son of Absalom to Joppa, and with him a considerable army; he drove out its occupants and remained there.

Deceit and Treachery of Trypho

12 Then Trypho left Ptolemais with a large army to invade the land of Judah, and Jonathan was with him under guard. 13 Simon encamped in Adida, facing the plain. 14 Trypho learned that Simon had risen up in place of his brother Jonathan, and that he was about to join battle with him, so he sent envoys to him and said, 15 "It is for the money that your brother Jonathan owed the royal treasury, in connection with the offices he held, that we are detaining him. 16 Send now one hundred talents of silver and two of his sons as hostages, so that when released he will not revolt against us, and we will release him."

17 Simon knew that they were speaking deceitfully to him, but he sent to get the money and the sons, so that he would not arouse great hostility among the people, who might say, 18 "It was because Simon did not send him the money and the sons, that Jonathan perished." 19 So he sent the sons and the hundred talents, but Trypho broke his word and did not release Jonathan.

20 After this Trypho came to invade the country and destroy it, and he circled around by the way to Adora. But Simon and his army kept marching along opposite him to every place he went. 21 Now the men in the citadel kept sending envoys to Trypho urging him to come to them by way of the wilderness and to send them food. 22 So Trypho got all his cavalry ready to go, but that night a very heavy snow fell, and he did not go because of the snow. He marched off and went into the land of Gilead. 23 When he approached Baskama, he killed Jonathan, and he was buried there. 24 Then Trypho turned and went back to his own land.
25 Simon sent and took the bones of his brother Jonathan, and buried him in Modein, the city of his ancestors. 26 All Israel bewailed him with great lamentation, and mourned for him many days. 27 And Simon built a monument over the tomb of his father and his brothers; he made it high so that it might be seen, with polished stone at the front and back. 28 He also erected seven pyramids, opposite one another, for his father and mother and four brothers. 29 For the pyramids he devised an elaborate setting, erecting about them great columns, and on the columns he put suits of armor for a permanent memorial, and beside the suits of armor he carved ships, so that they could be seen by all who sail the sea. 30 This is the tomb that he built in Modein; it remains to this day.

Simon makes Judea independent

31 Trypho dealt treacherously with the young King Antiochus; he killed him 32 and became king in his place, putting on the crown of Asia; and he brought great calamity on the land. 33 But Simon built up the strongholds of Judea and walled them all around, with high towers and great walls and gates and bolts, and he stored food in the strongholds. 34 Simon also chose emissaries and sent them to King Demetrius with a request to grant relief to the country, for all that Trypho did was to plunder. 35 King Demetrius sent him a favorable reply to this request, and wrote him a letter as follows, 36 "King Demetrius to Simon, the high priest and friend of kings, and to the elders and nation of the Jews, greetings. 37 We have received the gold crown and the palm branch that you sent, and we are ready to make a general peace with you and to write to our officials to grant you release from tribute. 38 All the grants that we have made to you remain valid, and let the strongholds that you have built be your possession. 39 We pardon any errors and offenses committed to this day, and cancel the crown tax that you owe; and whatever other tax has been collected in Jerusalem shall be collected no longer. 40 And if any of you are qualified to be enrolled in our bodyguard, let them be enrolled, and let there be peace between us."
In the one hundred seventieth year the yoke of the Gentiles was removed from Israel, and the people began to write in their documents and contracts, "In the first year of Simon the great high priest and commander and leader of the Jews."

In those days Simon encamped against Gazara and surrounded it with troops. He made a siege engine, brought it up to the city, and battered and captured one tower. The men in the siege engine leaped out into the city, and a great tumult arose in the city. The men in the city, with their wives and children, went up on the wall with their clothes torn, and they cried out with a loud voice, asking Simon to make peace with them; they said, "Do not treat us according to our wicked acts but according to your mercy." So Simon reached an agreement with them and stopped fighting against them. But he expelled them from the city and cleansed the houses in which the idols were located, and then entered it with hymns and praise. He removed all uncleanness from it, and settled in it those who observed the law. He also strengthened its fortifications and built in it a house for himself.

Those who were in the citadel at Jerusalem were prevented from going in and out to buy and sell in the country. So they were very hungry, and many of them perished from famine. Then they cried to Simon to make peace with them, and he did so. But he expelled them from there and cleansed the citadel from its pollutions. On the twenty-third day of the second month, in the one hundred seventy-first year, the Jews entered it with praise and palm branches, and with harps and cymbals and stringed instruments, and with hymns and songs, because a great enemy had been crushed and removed from Israel. Simon decreed that every year they should celebrate this day with rejoicing. He strengthened the fortifications of the temple hill alongside the citadel, and he and his men lived there. Simon saw that his son John had reached manhood, and so he made him commander of all the forces; and he lived at Gazara.
[1 Maccabees 14]
Capture of Demetrius II

1 In the one hundred seventy-second year King Demetrius assembled his forces and marched into Media to obtain help, so that he could make war against Trypho. 2 When King Arsaces of Persia and Media heard that Demetrius had invaded his territory, he sent one of his generals to take him alive. 3 The general went and defeated the army of Demetrius, and seized him and took him to Arsaces, who put him under guard.

Eulogy of Simon

4 The land had rest all the days of Simon.  
   He sought the good of his nation;  
   his rule was pleasing to them,  
   as was the honor shown him, all his days.  
5 To crown all his honors he took Joppa for a harbor,  
   and opened a way to the isles of the sea.  
6 He extended the borders of his nation,  
   and gained full control of the country.  
7 He gathered a host of captives;  
   he ruled over Gazara and Beth-zur and the citadel,  
   and he removed its uncleanness from it;  
   and there was none to oppose him.  
8 They tilled their land in peace;  
   the ground gave its increase,  
   and the trees of the plains their fruit.  
9 Old men sat in the streets;  
   they all talked together of good things,  
   and the youths put on splendid military attire.  
10 He supplied the towns with food,  
   and furnished them with the means of defense,  
   until his renown spread to the ends of the earth.  
11 He established peace in the land,  
   and Israel rejoiced with great joy.  
12 All the people sat under their own vines and fig trees,  
   and there was none to make them afraid.
13 No one was left in the land to fight them, 
and the kings were crushed in those days.
14 He gave help to all the humble among his people; 
he sought out the law, 
and did away with all the renegades and outlaws.
15 He made the sanctuary glorious, 
and added to the vessels of the sanctuary.

Alliances with Rome and Sparta

16 It was heard in Rome, and as far away as Sparta, that Jonathan had died, and they were deeply grieved. 17 When they heard that his brother Simon had become high priest in his stead, and that he was ruling over the country and the towns in it, 18 they wrote to him on bronze tablets to renew with him the friendship and alliance that they had established with his brothers Judas and Jonathan. 19 And these were read before the assembly in Jerusalem.

20 This is a copy of the letter that the Spartans sent:
"The rulers and the city of the Spartans to the high priest Simon and to the elders and the priests and the rest of the Jewish people, our brothers, greetings. 21 The envoys who were sent to our people have told us about your glory and honor, and we rejoiced at their coming. 22 We have recorded what they said in our public decrees, as follows, 'Numenius son of Antiochus and Antipater son of Jason, envoys of the Jews, have come to us to renew their friendship with us. 23 It has pleased our people to receive these men with honor and to put a copy of their words in the public archives, so that the people of the Spartans may have a record of them. And they have sent a copy of this to the high priest Simon.'"

24 After this Simon sent Numenius to Rome with a large gold shield weighing one thousand minas, to confirm the alliance with the Romans.
Simon elected high priest, military commander, and ruler

25 When the people heard these things they said, "How shall we thank Simon and his sons? 26 For he and his brothers and the house of his father have stood firm; they have fought and repulsed Israel's enemies and established its freedom." 27 So they made a record on bronze tablets and put it on pillars on Mount Zion.

This is a copy of what they wrote: "On the eighteenth day of Elul, in the one hundred seventy-second year, which is the third year of the great high priest Simon, 28 in Asaramel, in the great assembly of the priests and the people and the rulers of the nation and the elders of the country, the following was proclaimed to us:

29 "Since wars often occurred in the country, Simon son of Mattathias, a priest of the sons of Joarib, and his brothers, exposed themselves to danger and resisted the enemies of their nation, in order that their sanctuary and the law might be preserved; and they brought great glory to their nation. 30 Jonathan rallied the nation, became their high priest, and was gathered to his people. 31 When their enemies decided to invade their country and lay hands on their sanctuary, 32 then Simon rose up and fought for his nation. He spent great sums of his own money; he armed the soldiers of his nation and paid them wages. 33 He fortified the towns of Judea, and Beth-zur on the borders of Judea, where formerly the arms of the enemy had been stored, and he placed there a garrison of Jews. 34 He also fortified Joppa, which is by the sea, and Gazara, which is on the borders of Azotus, where the enemy formerly lived. He settled Jews there, and provided in those towns whatever was necessary for their restoration.

35 "The people saw Simon's faithfulness and the glory that he had resolved to win for his nation, and they made him their leader and high priest, because he had done all these things and because of the justice and loyalty that he had maintained toward his nation. He sought in every way to exalt his people. 36 In his days things prospered in his hands, so that the Gentiles were put out of the country, as were also those in the city of David in Jerusalem, who had built themselves a citadel from which they used to sally forth and defile the environs of
the sanctuary, doing great damage to its purity. 37 He settled Jews in it and fortified it for the safety of the country and of the city, and built the walls of Jerusalem higher.

38 "In view of these things King Demetrius confirmed him in the high priesthood, 39 made him one of his Friends, and paid him high honors. 40 For he had heard that the Jews were addressed by the Romans as friends and allies and brothers, and that the Romans had received the envoys of Simon with honor.

41 "The Jews and their priests have resolved that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise, 42 and that he should be governor over them and that he should take charge of the sanctuary and appoint officials over its tasks and over the country and the weapons and the strongholds, and that he should take charge of the sanctuary, 43 and that he should be obeyed by all, and that all contracts in the country should be written in his name, and that he should be clothed in purple and wear gold.

44 "None of the people or priests shall be permitted to nullify any of these decisions or to oppose what he says, or to convene an assembly in the country without his permission, or to be clothed in purple or put on a gold buckle. 45 Whoever acts contrary to these decisions or rejects any of them shall be liable to punishment."

46 All the people agreed to grant Simon the right to act in accordance with these decisions. 47 So Simon accepted and agreed to be high priest, to be commander and ethnarch of the Jews and priests, and to be protector of them all. 48 And they gave orders to inscribe this decree on bronze tablets, to put them up in a conspicuous place in the precincts of the sanctuary, 49 and to deposit copies of them in the treasury, so that Simon and his sons might have them.

[1 Maccabees 15]
Arrival of Antiochus VII

1 Antiochus, son of King Demetrius, sent a letter from the islands of the sea to Simon, the priest and ethnarch of the Jews, and to all the
nation; 2 its contents were as follows: "King Antiochus to Simon the high priest and ethnarch and to the nation of the Jews, greetings. 3 Whereas certain scoundrels have gained control of the kingdom of our ancestors, and I intend to lay claim to the kingdom so that I may restore it as it formerly was, and have recruited a host of mercenary troops and have equipped warships, 4 and intend to make a landing in the country so that I may proceed against those who have destroyed our country and those who have devastated many cities in my kingdom, 5 now therefore I confirm to you all the tax remissions that the kings before me have granted you, and a release from all the other payments from which they have released you. 6 I permit you to mint your own coinage as money for your country, 7 and I grant freedom to Jerusalem and the sanctuary. All the weapons that you have prepared and the strongholds that you have built and now hold shall remain yours. 8 Every debt you owe to the royal treasury and any such future debts shall be canceled for you from henceforth and for all time. 9 When we gain control of our kingdom, we will bestow great honor on you and your nation and the temple, so that your glory will become manifest in all the earth."

10 In the one hundred seventy-fourth year Antiochus set out and invaded the land of his ancestors. All the troops rallied to him, so that there were only a few with Trypho. 11 Antiochus pursued him, and Trypho came in his flight to Dor, which is by the sea; 12 for he knew that troubles had converged on him, and his troops had deserted him. 13 So Antiochus encamped against Dor, and with him were one hundred twenty thousand warriors and eight thousand cavalry. 14 He surrounded the town, and the ships joined battle from the sea; he pressed the town hard from land and sea, and permitted no one to leave or enter it.

Renewal of alliance with Rome

15 Then Numenius and his companions arrived from Rome, with letters to the kings and countries, in which the following was written: 16 "Lucius, consul of the Romans, to King Ptolemy, greetings. 17 The envoys of the Jews have come to us as our friends and allies to renew our ancient friendship and alliance. They had been sent by the high
priest Simon and by the Jewish people 18 and have brought a gold shield weighing one thousand minas. 19 We therefore have decided to write to the kings and countries that they should not seek their harm or make war against them and their cities and their country, or make alliance with those who war against them. 20 And it has seemed good to us to accept the shield from them. 21 Therefore if any scoundrels have fled to you from their country, hand them over to the high priest Simon, so that he may punish them according to their law."

22 The consul wrote the same thing to King Demetrius and to Attalus and Ariarathes and Arsaces, 23 and to all the countries, and to Sampsames, and to the Spartans, and to Delos, and to Myndos, and to Sicyon, and to Caria, and to Samos, and to Pamphylia, and to Lycia, and to Halicarnassus, and to Rhodes, and to Phaselis, and to Cos, and to Side, and to Aradus and Gortyna and Cnidus and Cyprus and Cyrene. 24 They also sent a copy of these things to the high priest Simon.

War with Antiochus VII

25 King Antiochus besieged Dor for the second time, continually throwing his forces against it and making engines of war; and he shut Trypho up and kept him from going out or in. 26 And Simon sent to Antiochus two thousand picked troops, to fight for him, and silver and gold and a large amount of military equipment. 27 But he refused to receive them, and broke all the agreements he formerly had made with Simon, and became estranged from him. 28 He sent to him Athenobius, one of his Friends, to confer with him, saying, "You hold control of Joppa and Gazara and the citadel in Jerusalem; they are cities of my kingdom. 29 You have devastated their territory, you have done great damage in the land, and you have taken possession of many places in my kingdom. 30 Now then, hand over the cities that you have seized and the tribute money of the places that you have conquered outside the borders of Judea; 31 or else pay me five hundred talents of silver for the destruction that you have caused and five hundred talents more for the tribute money of the cities. Otherwise we will come and make war on you."
32 So Athenobius, the king's Friend, came to Jerusalem, and when he saw the splendor of Simon, and the sideboard with its gold and silver plate, and his great magnificence, he was amazed. When he reported to him the king's message, 33 Simon said to him in reply: "We have neither taken foreign land nor seized foreign property, but only the inheritance of our ancestors, which at one time had been unjustly taken by our enemies. 34 Now that we have the opportunity, we are firmly holding the inheritance of our ancestors. 35 As for Joppa and Gazara, which you demand, they were causing great damage among the people and to our land; for them we will give you one hundred talents."

Athenobius did not answer him a word, 36 but returned in wrath to the king and reported to him these words, and also the splendor of Simon and all that he had seen. And the king was very angry.

37 Meanwhile Trypho embarked on a ship and escaped to Orthosia. 38 Then the king made Cendebeus commander-in-chief of the coastal country, and gave him troops of infantry and cavalry. 39 He commanded him to encamp against Judea, to build up Kedron and fortify its gates, and to make war on the people; but the king pursued Trypho. 40 So Cendebeus came to Jamnia and began to provoke the people and invade Judea and take the people captive and kill them. 41 He built up Kedron and stationed horsemen and troops there, so that they might go out and make raids along the highways of Judea, as the king had ordered him.

[1 Maccabees 16]
Death of Simon and accession of John Hyrcanus I

1 John went up from Gazara and reported to his father Simon what Cendebeus had done. 2 And Simon called in his two eldest sons Judas and John, and said to them: "My brothers and I and my father's house have fought the wars of Israel from our youth until this day, and things have prospered in our hands so that we have delivered Israel many times. 3 But now I have grown old, and you by Heaven's mercy are mature in years. Take my place and my brother's, and go out and fight
for our nation, and may the help that comes from Heaven be with you."

4 So John chose out of the country twenty thousand warriors and cavalry, and they marched against Cendebeus and camped for the night in Modein. 5 Early in the morning they started out and marched into the plain, where a large force of infantry and cavalry was coming to meet them; and a stream lay between them. 6 Then he and his army lined up against them. He saw that the soldiers were afraid to cross the stream, so he crossed over first; and when his troops saw him, they crossed over after him. 7 Then he divided the army and placed the cavalry in the center of the infantry, for the cavalry of the enemy were very numerous. 8 They sounded the trumpets, and Cendebeus and his army were put to flight; many of them fell wounded and the rest fled into the stronghold. 9 At that time Judas the brother of John was wounded, but John pursued them until Cendebeus reached Kedron, which he had built. 10 They also fled into the towers that were in the fields of Azotus, and John burned it with fire, and about two thousand of them fell. He then returned to Judea safely.

11 Now Ptolemy son of Abubus had been appointed governor over the plain of Jericho; he had a large store of silver and gold, 12 for he was son-in-law of the high priest. 13 His heart was lifted up; he determined to get control of the country, and made treacherous plans against Simon and his sons, to do away with them. 14 Now Simon was visiting the towns of the country and attending to their needs, and he went down to Jericho with his sons Mattathias and Judas, in the one hundred seventy-seventh year, in the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat. 15 The son of Abubus received them treacherously in the little stronghold called Dok, which he had built; he gave them a great banquet, and hid men there. 16 When Simon and his sons were drunk, Ptolemy and his men rose up, took their weapons, rushed in against Simon in the banquet hall and killed him and his two sons, as well as some of his servants. 17 So he committed an act of great treachery and returned evil for good.
18 Then Ptolemy wrote a report about these things and sent it to the king, asking him to send troops to aid him and to turn over to him the towns and the country. 19 He sent other troops to Gazara to do away with John; he sent letters to the captains asking them to come to him so that he might give them silver and gold and gifts; 20 and he sent other troops to take possession of Jerusalem and the temple hill. 21 But someone ran ahead and reported to John at Gazara that his father and brothers had perished, and that "he has sent men to kill you also." 22 When he heard this, he was greatly shocked; he seized the men who came to destroy him and killed them, for he had found out that they were seeking to destroy him.

23 The rest of the acts of John and his wars and the brave deeds that he did, and the building of the walls that he completed, and his achievements, 24 are written in the annals of his high priesthood, from the time that he became high priest after his father.
Introduction

Second Maccabees narrates the story of the Maccabean revolt. Like 1 Maccabees and the book of Daniel, 2 Maccabees interprets the religious persecution suffered by the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes from 168-164 BCE. Each of the three books offers a different model of faithfulness in response to persecution as well as distinctive theological reflection on the sources of hope in times of crisis. First Maccabees highlights the military activity of the Maccabees and the subsequent establishment of the Hasmonean dynasty, taking the story down to the third generation in 134 BCE. Second Maccabees, in contrast, keeps its focus on the fate of the Temple in Jerusalem, ending its story when the Temple is secure in 161 BCE.

The literary style is lively, relying on dramatic narration and vivid portrayals of characters to evoke emotions in the reader. Following the style of Greek historiography, the author composes substantive speeches for his characters in order to entertain and instruct the reader. Written in Greek sometime between 124 and 63 BCE, the work skillfully combines Jewish theology with Greek stylistics. The author's introduction (2.19-32), using conventions of Greek literature, highlights his purposes and summarizes what is in store for the reader in the pages ahead. He reveals that his work is an epitome, condensing the five-volume history of Jason of Cyrene. The epitomist tells the reader that his story will be about Judas Maccabeus and his battles to regain the Temple from Antiochus, free Jerusalem and restore Jewish law to Judea.

Prefixed to the introduction are two letters exhorting the Jews in Egypt to observe the new festival of Hannukah, which had originated in Judea just over forty years earlier (1.1-2.18). The second letter is of particular interest because it includes stories about Jeremiah and
Nehemiah not found in the biblical books. Although it is not known how the letters came to be attached to the work of the epitomist, their focus on the purification of the Temple, like the introduction, helps prepare the reader for the story ahead.

The main body of the work (chs 3-15) recounts three successive attacks on the Temple, heroically repelled by brave Jewish fighters who are supported by heavenly warriors. Within this broad framework another, more explicitly theological structure unfolds. The epitomist has adopted the interpretation of history found in the biblical books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings, clearly laid out in Judg 2.6-23. Israel's history is a recurring cycle of blessing, when the people are faithful to the Lord; sin, when they forsake the Law; punishment when foreign enemies oppress Israel; and deliverance, when they cry out and the Lord shows mercy by intervening to save them. In 2 Maccabees the history of the Temple, reflecting the fortunes of the Jewish people, follows this cycle.

The history begins with the blessings brought by the good priest Onias (ch 3). The arresting story of the attack on the Temple treasury by Heliodorus and the angelic intervention that saved it highlights the importance of the Temple as the locus of the divine presence when the people are faithful. The sins of the people are ominously introduced in ch 4 with a description of the Hellenization that occurred under Jason, the brother of Onias. The rich details of this chapter provide a useful historical picture of the conflict in Jerusalem over accommodation to Greek culture, as well as the strife over the high priesthood, during the years before the persecutions of Antiochus. Modern historians have been guided by this nuanced account to view the Maccabean revolt as a mix of civil war and rebellion against a foreign tyrant. In chs 3 and 4, as throughout the book, the epitomist shows that the attack of Seleucid kings on Jerusalem was precipitated by the intrigues of Hellenizers in Jerusalem.

The wrenching stories of the persecutions endured when Antiochus IV swept into Jerusalem to quell civil unrest occupy chs 5-10, the centerpiece of the book. So skilled a historian is the epitomist that the reader that the reader understands the actions of Antiochus to be
politically inevitable (5.11-14) and theologically predictable (4.16-17; 5.18-20). Antiochus occupied Jerusalem in order to eliminate the religious traditions of the Jews and to force assimilation of Greek ways. His edict prohibited the Jews from keeping the sabbath, observing their laws of purity, and circumcising their sons. Historians believe he was attempting to remove what he saw as the cause of political disturbances in Judea. In this context the author tells the powerful stories of the first martyrs. The old man Eleazar chooses to die rather than eat pork, which is forbidden by the Torah. Like Socrates before his death, Eleazar delivers an eloquent speech describing his desire to leave a noble example to the young. The longest and most memorable story is the martyrdom of the mother and her seven sons. In the dramatic speeches made as the brothers go one by one to their deaths, the author illustrates some of the most profound and influential religious ideas of the book.

These stories of Jewish faithfulness are set in bold relief against the impious deeds of the Hellenizers. As their abandoning the law for Greek culture brought on the desecration of the Temple, so the prayers of the martyrs make possible the next part of the epitomist's story, the purification of the Temple. The book's theology is expressed in the last words of the seventh brother (7.37-38) as he goes willingly to his death "to bring to an end the wrath of the Almighty that has justly fallen on our whole nation." The introduction of Judas Maccabeus is the sign that God has heard the prayer of the martyrs and has seen their faithfulness. The stunning account of the revolt of Judas Maccabeus, his victory over Antiochus, and his purification of the Temple (8.1-10.9) weaves military history together with the language of theology. Similarly, the graphic account of Antiochus's death in ch 9 is designed to illustrate divine justice and the vindication of the martyrs.

The final section makes use of diplomatic correspondence and historical records to tell the history of Judea from 164 to 161 BCE under the Seleucid kings Antiochus Eupator and Demetrius I. In spite of royal permission for the Jews to live in peace according to their own laws, local rulers of neighboring regions were constantly stirring up conflict. As in earlier parts of the book, the epitomist frequently alludes to Hellenizers as the initiators of the trouble. Woven throughout these
detailed historical accounts are the prayers of Judas and the people. For the epitomist the military victories are signs that God hears the prayers of the faithful. The vivid account of three heavenly rescues signal to the reader that God was acting through Judas Maccabeus (10.29-31; 12.22; 15.12-16).

A constellation of important theological ideas not found in the Hebrew scriptures but important in Judaism and Christianity appears in 2 Maccabees. Chief among these are the two related ideas of the creation of the world out of nothing ("creatio ex nihilo," 7.28) and the resurrection of the dead (hinted at in Dan 12.2 but explicitly stated in 2 Macc 7). The relation between these two beliefs is clearly articulated in the speeches of the mother and her seven sons (ch 7), which provide the most closely reasoned arguments in the Bible about the resurrection of the dead. This story of the mother encouraging her seven sons to die for their faith in certain hope of resurrection, together with the companion story of the aged Eleazar going willingly to his death rather than eat food forbidden by the Torah (ch 6), become the models for later authors writing Jewish and Christian martyrrologies. The intrinsic link between the ideas of resurrection and martyrdom is evident as well in the story of Razis (13.37-45).

The belief in resurrection gives rise to the practice of praying for the dead. When Judas Maccabeus discovers that his fallen companions are wearing sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, he makes a sin offering and prays that their sin might be blotted out (12.39-43a). The epitomist interprets this as a prayer on behalf of the dead, justified by the hope of the resurrection (12.43b-45). Related to the idea of resurrection is the certainty that God's justice will punish the wicked as it rewards the righteous (3.27-28; 9.28; 13.8; 15.32-33), expressed later in the rabbinic principle of measure for measure. The deaths of Andronicus (4.30-38), Menelaus (13.1-8), and Nicanor (15.1-28) are described with explicit reference to divine justice. The story of the death of Antiochus (ch 9), borrowing themes from Isa 14, provides the most expressive teaching of this principle.

The theological idea that dominates the book is the assurance that the history of Antiochene persecution and the Maccabean revolt reveals
God's care for his people and the holy Temple. Through engaging storytelling and instructive speeches by the characters, the authors guides the reader to see the events of this history with the eyes of faith.

[2 Maccabees 1]
Letter to the Jews in Egypt

1 The Jews in Jerusalem and those in the land of Judea,
   To their Jewish kindred in Egypt,
   Greetings and true peace.

2 May God do good to you, and may he remember his covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, his faithful servants. 3 May he give you all a heart to worship him and to do his will with a strong heart and a willing spirit. 4 May he open your heart to his law and his commandments, and may he bring peace. 5 May he hear your prayers and be reconciled to you, and may he not forsake you in time of evil. 6 We are now praying for you here.

7 In the reign of Demetrius, in the one hundred sixty-ninth year, we Jews wrote to you, in the critical distress that came upon us in those years after Jason and his company revolted from the holy land and the kingdom 8 and burned the gate and shed innocent blood. We prayed to the Lord and were heard, and we offered sacrifice and grain offering, and we lit the lamps and set out the loaves. 9 And now see that you keep the festival of booths in the month of Chislev, in the one hundred eighty-eighth year.

Letter to Aristobulus

10 The people of Jerusalem and of Judea and the senate and Judas, To Aristobulus, who is of the family of the anointed priests, teacher of King Ptolemy, and to the Jews in Egypt, Greetings and good health.
11 Having been saved by God out of grave dangers we thank him greatly for taking our side against the king, 12 for he drove out those who fought against the holy city. 13 When the leader reached Persia with a force that seemed irresistible, they were cut to pieces in the temple of Nanea by a deception employed by the priests of the goddess Nanea. 14 On the pretext of intending to marry her, Antiochus came to the place together with his Friends, to secure most of its treasures as a dowry. 15 When the priests of the temple of Nanea had set out the treasures and Antiochus had come with a few men inside the wall of the sacred precinct, they closed the temple as soon as he entered it. 16 Opening a secret door in the ceiling, they threw stones and struck down the leader and his men; they dismembered them and cut off their heads and threw them to the people outside. 17 Blessed in every way be our God, who has brought judgment on those who have behaved impiously.

18 Since on the twenty-fifth day of Chislev we shall celebrate the purification of the temple, we thought it necessary to notify you, in order that you also may celebrate the festival of booths and the festival of the fire given when Nehemiah, who built the temple and the altar, offered sacrifices.

19 For when our ancestors were being led captive to Persia, the pious priests of that time took some of the fire of the altar and secretly hid it in the hollow of a dry cistern, where they took such precautions that the place was unknown to anyone. 20 But after many years had passed, when it pleased God, Nehemiah, having been commissioned by the king of Persia, sent the descendants of the priests who had hidden the fire to get it. And when they reported to us that they had not found fire but only a thick liquid, he ordered them to dip it out and bring it. 21 When the materials for the sacrifices were presented, Nehemiah ordered the priests to sprinkle the liquid on the wood and on the things laid upon it. 22 When this had been done and some time had passed, and when the sun, which had been clouded over, shone out, a great fire blazed up, so that all marveled. 23 And while the sacrifice was being consumed, the priests offered prayer — the priests and everyone. Jonathan led, and the rest responded, as did Nehemiah. 24 The prayer was to this effect:
"O Lord, Lord God, Creator of all things, you are awe-inspiring and strong and just and merciful, you alone are king and are kind, 25 you alone are bountiful, you alone are just and almighty and eternal. You rescue Israel from every evil; you chose the ancestors and consecrated them. 26 Accept this sacrifice on behalf of all your people Israel and preserve your portion and make it holy. 27 Gather together our scattered people, set free those who are slaves among the Gentiles, look on those who are rejected and despised, and let the Gentiles know that you are our God. 28 Punish those who oppress and are insolent with pride. 29 Plant your people in your holy place, as Moses promised."

30 Then the priests sang the hymns. 31 After the materials of the sacrifice had been consumed, Nehemiah ordered that the liquid that was left should be poured on large stones. 32 When this was done, a flame blazed up; but when the light from the altar shone back, it went out. 33 When this matter became known, and it was reported to the king of the Persians that, in the place where the exiled priests had hidden the fire, the liquid had appeared with which Nehemiah and his associates had burned the materials of the sacrifice, 34 the king investigated the matter, and enclosed the place and made it sacred. 35 And with those persons whom the king favored he exchanged many excellent gifts. 36 Nehemiah and his associates called this "nephthar," which means purification, but by most people it is called naphtha.

[2 Maccabees 2]

1 One finds in the records that the prophet Jeremiah ordered those who were being deported to take some of the fire, as has been mentioned, 2 and that the prophet, after giving them the law, instructed those who were being deported not to forget the commandments of the Lord, or to be led astray in their thoughts on seeing the gold and silver statues and their adornment. 3 And with other similar words he exhorted them that the law should not depart from their hearts.

4 It was also in the same document that the prophet, having received an oracle, ordered that the tent and the ark should follow with him,
and that he went out to the mountain where Moses had gone up and had seen the inheritance of God. 5 Jeremiah came and found a cave-dwelling, and he brought there the tent and the ark and the altar of incense; then he sealed up the entrance. 6 Some of those who followed him came up intending to mark the way, but could not find it. 7 When Jeremiah learned of it, he rebuked them and declared: "The place shall remain unknown until God gathers his people together again and shows his mercy. 8 Then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated."

9 It was also made clear that being possessed of wisdom Solomon offered sacrifice for the dedication and completion of the temple. 10 Just as Moses prayed to the Lord, and fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifices, so also Solomon prayed, and the fire came down and consumed the whole burnt offerings. 11 And Moses said, "They were consumed because the sin offering had not been eaten." 12 Likewise Solomon also kept the eight days.

13 The same things are reported in the records and in the memoirs of Nehemiah, and also that he found a library and collected the books about the kings and prophets, and the writings of David, and letters of kings about votive offerings. 14 In the same way Judas also collected all the books that had been lost on account of the war that had come upon us, and they are in our possession. 15 So if you have need of them, send people to get them for you.

16 Since, therefore, we are about to celebrate the purification, we write to you. Will you therefore please keep the days? 17 It is God who has saved all his people, and has returned the inheritance to all, and the kingship and the priesthood and the consecration, 18 as he promised through the law. We have hope in God that he will soon have mercy on us and will gather us from everywhere under heaven into his holy place, for he has rescued us from great evils and has purified the place.
The epitomist's preface

19 The story of Judas Maccabeus and his brothers, and the purification of the great temple, and the dedication of the altar, 20 and further the wars against Antiochus Epiphanes and his son Eupator, 21 and the appearances that came from heaven to those who fought bravely for Judaism, so that though few in number they seized the whole land and pursued the barbarian hordes, 22 and regained possession of the temple famous throughout the world, and liberated the city, and re-established the laws that were about to be abolished, while the Lord with great kindness became gracious to them — 23 all this, which has been set forth by Jason of Cyrene in five volumes, we shall attempt to condense into a single book. 24 For considering the flood of statistics involved and the difficulty there is for those who wish to enter upon the narratives of history because of the mass of material, 25 we have aimed to please those who wish to read, to make it easy for those who are inclined to memorize, and to profit all readers. 26 For us who have undertaken the toil of abbreviating, it is no light matter but calls for sweat and loss of sleep, 27 just as it is not easy for one who prepares a banquet and seeks the benefit of others. Nevertheless, to secure the gratitude of many we will gladly endure the uncomfortable toil, 28 leaving the responsibility for exact details to the compiler, while devoting our effort to arriving at the outlines of the condensation. 29 For as the master builder of a new house must be concerned with the whole construction, while the one who undertakes its painting and decoration has to consider only what is suitable for its adornment, such in my judgment is the case with us. 30 It is the duty of the original historian to occupy the ground, to discuss matters from every side, and to take trouble with details, 31 but the one who recasts the narrative should be allowed to strive for brevity of expression and to forego exhaustive treatment. 32 At this point therefore let us begin our narrative, without adding any more to what has already been said; for it would be foolish to lengthen the preface while cutting short the history itself.
[2 Maccabees 3]
Simon's plot against Onias

1 While the holy city was inhabited in unbroken peace and the laws were strictly observed because of the piety of the high priest Onias and his hatred of wickedness, 2 it came about that the kings themselves honored the place and glorified the temple with the finest presents, 3 even to the extent that King Seleucus of Asia defrayed from his own revenues all the expenses connected with the service of the sacrifices.

4 But a man named Simon, of the tribe of Benjamin, who had been made captain of the temple, had a disagreement with the high priest about the administration of the city market. 5 Since he could not prevail over Onias, he went to Apollonius of Tarsus, who at that time was governor of Coele Syria and Phoenicia, 6 and reported to him that the treasury in Jerusalem was full of untold sums of money, so that the amount of the funds could not be reckoned, and that they did not belong to the account of the sacrifices, but that it was possible for them to fall under the control of the king. 7 When Apollonius met the king, he told him of the money about which he had been informed. The king chose Heliodorus, who was in charge of his affairs, and sent him with commands to effect the removal of the reported wealth. 8 Heliodorus at once set out on his journey, ostensibly to make a tour of inspection of the cities of Coele Syria and Phoenicia, but in fact to carry out the king's purpose.

9 When he had arrived at Jerusalem and had been kindly welcomed by the high priest of the city, he told about the disclosure that had been made and stated why he had come, and he inquired whether this really was the situation. 10 The high priest explained that there were some deposits belonging to widows and orphans, 11 and also some money of Hyrcanus son of Tobias, a man of very prominent position, and that it totaled in all four hundred talents of silver and two hundred of gold. To such an extent the impious Simon had misrepresented the facts. 12 And he said that it was utterly impossible that wrong should be done to those people who had trusted in the holiness of the place and in the sanctity and inviolability of the temple that is honored throughout the whole world.
13 But Heliodorus, because of the orders he had from the king, said that this money must in any case be confiscated for the king's treasury. 
14 So he set a day and went in to direct the inspection of these funds.

There was no little distress throughout the whole city. 
15 The priests prostrated themselves before the altar in their priestly vestments and called toward heaven upon him who had given the law about deposits, that he should keep them safe for those who had deposited them. 
16 To see the appearance of the high priest was to be wounded at heart, for his face and the change in his color disclosed the anguish of his soul. 
17 For terror and bodily trembling had come over the man, which plainly showed to those who looked at him the pain lodged in his heart. 
18 People also hurried out of their houses in crowds to make a general supplication because the holy place was about to be brought into dishonor. 
19 Women, girded with sackcloth under their breasts, thronged the streets. Some of the young women who were kept indoors ran together to the gates, and some to the walls, while others peered out of the windows. 
20 And holding up their hands to heaven, they all made supplication. 
21 There was something pitiable in the prostration of the whole populace and the anxiety of the high priest in his great anguish.

22 While they were calling upon the Almighty Lord that he would keep what had been entrusted safe and secure for those who had entrusted it, 
23 Heliodorus went on with what had been decided. 
24 But when he arrived at the treasury with his bodyguard, then and there the Sovereign of spirits and of all authority caused so great a manifestation that all who had been so bold as to accompany him were astounded by the power of God, and became faint with terror. 
25 For there appeared to them a magnificently caparisoned horse, with a rider of frightening mien; it rushed furiously at Heliodorus and struck at him with its front hoofs. Its rider was seen to have armor and weapons of gold.
26 Two young men also appeared to him, remarkably strong, gloriously beautiful and splendidly dressed, who stood on either side of him and flogged him continuously, inflicting many blows on him. 
27 When he suddenly fell to the ground and deep darkness came over him, his men took him up, put him on a stretcher, 
28 and carried him away — this man who had just entered the aforesaid treasury with a great retinue
and all his bodyguard but was now unable to help himself. They recognized clearly the sovereign power of God.

29 While he lay prostrate, speechless because of the divine intervention and deprived of any hope of recovery, 30 they praised the Lord who had acted marvelously for his own place. And the temple, which a little while before was full of fear and disturbance, was filled with joy and gladness, now that the Almighty Lord had appeared.

31 Some of Heliodorus's friends quickly begged Onias to call upon the Most High to grant life to one who was lying quite at his last breath. 32 So the high priest, fearing that the king might get the notion that some foul play had been perpetrated by the Jews with regard to Heliodorus, offered sacrifice for the man's recovery. 33 While the high priest was making an atonement, the same young men appeared again to Heliodorus dressed in the same clothing, and they stood and said, "Be very grateful to the high priest Onias, since for his sake the Lord has granted you your life. 34 And see that you, who have been flogged by heaven, report to all people the majestic power of God." Having said this they vanished.

35 Then Heliodorus offered sacrifice to the Lord and made very great vows to the Savior of his life, and having bidden Onias farewell, he marched off with his forces to the king. 36 He bore testimony to all concerning the deeds of the supreme God, which he had seen with his own eyes. 37 When the king asked Heliodorus what sort of person would be suitable to send on another mission to Jerusalem, he replied, 38 "If you have any enemy or plotter against your government, send him there, for you will get him back thoroughly flogged, if he survives at all; for there is certainly some power of God about the place. 39 For he who has his dwelling in heaven watches over that place himself and brings it aid, and he strikes and destroys those who come to do it injury." 40 This was the outcome of the episode of Heliodorus and the protection of the treasury.
2 Maccabees 4

1 The previously mentioned Simon, who had informed about the money against his own country, slandered Onias, saying that it was he who had incited Heliodorus and had been the real cause of the misfortune. 2 He dared to designate as a plotter against the government the man who was the benefactor of the city, the protector of his compatriots, and a zealot for the laws. 3 When his hatred progressed to such a degree that even murders were committed by one of Simon's approved agents, 4 Onias recognized that the rivalry was serious and that Apollonius son of Menestheus, and governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, was intensifying the malice of Simon. 5 So he appealed to the king, not accusing his compatriots but having in view the welfare, both public and private, of all the people. 6 For he saw that without the king's attention public affairs could not again reach a peaceful settlement, and that Simon would not stop his folly.

Jason as high priest

7 When Seleucus died and Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes, succeeded to the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias obtained the high priesthood by corruption, 8 promising the king at an interview three hundred sixty talents of silver, and from another source of revenue eighty talents. 9 In addition to this he promised to pay one hundred fifty more if permission were given to establish by his authority a gymnasium and a body of youth for it, and to enroll the people of Jerusalem as citizens of Antioch. 10 When the king assented and Jason came to office, he at once shifted his compatriots over to the Greek way of life.

11 He set aside the existing royal concessions to the Jews, secured through John the father of Eupolemus, who went on the mission to establish friendship and alliance with the Romans; and he destroyed the lawful ways of living and introduced new customs contrary to the law. 12 He took delight in establishing a gymnasium right under the citadel, and he induced the noblest of the young men to wear the Greek hat. 13 There was such an extreme of Hellenization and increase in the adoption of foreign ways because of the surpassing wickedness
of Jason, who was ungodly and no true high priest, 14 that the priests were no longer intent upon their service at the altar. Despising the sanctuary and neglecting the sacrifices, they hurried to take part in the unlawful proceedings in the wrestling arena after the signal for the discus-throwing, 15 disdaining the honors prized by their ancestors and putting the highest value upon Greek forms of prestige. 16 For this reason heavy disaster overtook them, and those whose ways of living they admired and wished to imitate completely became their enemies and punished them. 17 It is no light thing to show irreverence to the divine laws — a fact that later events will make clear.

18 When the quadrennial games were being held at Tyre and the king was present, 19 the vile Jason sent envoys, chosen as being Antiochian citizens from Jerusalem, to carry three hundred silver drachmas for the sacrifice to Hercules. Those who carried the money, however, thought best not to use it for sacrifice, because that was inappropriate, but to expend it for another purpose. 20 So this money was intended by the sender for the sacrifice to Hercules, but by the decision of its carriers it was applied to the construction of triremes.

21 When Apollonius son of Menestheus was sent to Egypt for the coronation of Philometor as king, Antiochus learned that Philometor had become hostile to his government, and he took measures for his own security. Therefore upon arriving at Joppa he proceeded to Jerusalem. 22 He was welcomed magnificently by Jason and the city, and ushered in with a blaze of torches and with shouts. Then he marched his army into Phoenicia.

**Menelaus as high priest**

23 After a period of three years Jason sent Menelaus, the brother of the previously mentioned Simon, to carry the money to the king and to complete the records of essential business. 24 But he, when presented to the king, extolled him with an air of authority, and secured the high priesthood for himself, outbidding Jason by three hundred talents of silver. 25 After receiving the king's orders he returned, possessing no qualification for the high priesthood, but having the hot temper of a cruel tyrant and the rage of a savage wild beast. 26 So Jason, who after
supplanting his own brother was supplanted by another man, was
driven as a fugitive into the land of Ammon. 27 Although Menelaus
continued to hold the office, he did not pay regularly any of the
money promised to the king. 28 When Sostratus the captain of the
citadel kept requesting payment — for the collection of the revenue
was his responsibility — the two of them were summoned by the king
on account of this issue. 29 Menelaus left his own brother Lysimachus
as deputy in the high priesthood, while Sostratus left Crates, the
commander of the Cyprian troops.

30 While such was the state of affairs, it happened that the people of
Tarsus and of Mallus revolted because their cities had been given as a
present to Antiochis, the king’s concubine. 31 So the king went
hurriedly to settle the trouble, leaving Andronicus, a man of high rank,
to act as his deputy. 32 But Menelaus, thinking he had obtained a
suitable opportunity, stole some of the gold vessels of the temple and
gave them to Andronicus; other vessels, as it happened, he had sold to
Tyre and the neighboring cities. 33 When Onias became fully aware of
these acts, he publicly exposed them, having first withdrawn to a place
of sanctuary at Daphne near Antioch. 34 Therefore Menelaus, taking
Andronicus aside, urged him to kill Onias. Andronicus came to Onias,
and resorting to treachery, offered him sworn pledges and gave him
his right hand; he persuaded him, though still suspicious, to come out
from the place of sanctuary; then, with no regard for justice, he
immediately put him out of the way.

35 For this reason not only Jews, but many also of other nations, were
grieved and displeased at the unjust murder of the man. 36 When the
king returned from the region of Cilicia, the Jews in the city appealed
to him with regard to the unreasonable murder of Onias, and the
Greeks shared their hatred of the crime. 37 Therefore Antiochus was
grieved at heart and filled with pity, and wept because of the
moderation and good conduct of the deceased. 38 Inflamed with
anger, he immediately stripped off the purple robe from Andronicus,
tore off his clothes, and led him around the whole city to that very
place where he had committed the outrage against Onias, and there
he dispatched the bloodthirsty fellow. The Lord thus repaid him with
the punishment he deserved.

39 When many acts of sacrilege had been committed in the city by Lysimachus with the connivance of Menelaus, and when report of them had spread abroad, the populace gathered against Lysimachus, because many of the gold vessels had already been stolen. 40 Since the crowds were becoming aroused and filled with anger, Lysimachus armed about three thousand men and launched an unjust attack, under the leadership of a certain Auranus, a man advanced in years and no less advanced in folly. 41 But when the Jews became aware that Lysimachus was attacking them, some picked up stones, some blocks of wood, and others took handfuls of the ashes that were lying around, and threw them in wild confusion at Lysimachus and his men. 42 As a result, they wounded many of them, and killed some, and put all the rest to flight; the temple robber himself they killed close by the treasury.

43 Charges were brought against Menelaus about this incident. 44 When the king came to Tyre, three men sent by the senate presented the case before him. 45 But Menelaus, already as good as beaten, promised a substantial bribe to Ptolemy son of Dorymenes to win over the king. 46 Therefore Ptolemy, taking the king aside into a colonnade as if for refreshment, induced the king to change his mind. 47 Menelaus, the cause of all the trouble, he acquitted of the charges against him, while he sentenced to death those unfortunate men, who would have been freed uncondemned if they had pleaded even before Scythians. 48 And so those who had spoken for the city and the villages and the holy vessels quickly suffered the unjust penalty. 49 Therefore even the Tyrians, showing their hatred of the crime, provided magnificently for their funeral. 50 But Menelaus, because of the greed of those in power, remained in office, growing in wickedness, having become the chief plotter against his compatriots.

[2 Maccabees 5]
Antiochus IV desecrates the Temple

1 About this time Antiochus made his second invasion of Egypt. 2 And it happened that, for almost forty days, there appeared over all the city golden-clad cavalry charging through the air, in companies fully armed
with lances and drawn swords — 3 troops of cavalry drawn up, attacks and counterattacks made on this side and on that, brandishing of shields, massing of spears, hurling of missiles, the flash of golden trappings, and armor of all kinds. 4 Therefore everyone prayed that the apparition might prove to have been a good omen.

5 When a false rumor arose that Antiochus was dead, Jason took no fewer than a thousand men and suddenly made an assault on the city. When the troops on the wall had been forced back and at last the city was being taken, Menelaus took refuge in the citadel. 6 But Jason kept relentlessly slaughtering his compatriots, not realizing that success at the cost of one's kindred is the greatest misfortune, but imagining that he was setting up trophies of victory over enemies and not over compatriots. 7 He did not, however, gain control of the government; in the end he got only disgrace from his conspiracy, and fled again into the country of the Ammonites. 8 Finally he met a miserable end. Accused before Aretas the ruler of the Arabs, fleeing from city to city, pursued by everyone, hated as a rebel against the laws, and abhorred as the executioner of his country and his compatriots, he was cast ashore in Egypt. 9 There he who had driven many from their own country into exile died in exile, having embarked to go to the Lacedaemonians in hope of finding protection because of their kinship. 10 He who had cast out many to lie unburied had no one to mourn for him; he had no funeral of any sort and no place in the tomb of his ancestors.

11 When news of what had happened reached the king, he took it to mean that Judea was in revolt. So, raging inwardly, he left Egypt and took the city by storm. 12 He commanded his soldiers to cut down relentlessly everyone they met and to kill those who went into their houses. 13 Then there was massacre of young and old, destruction of boys, women, and children, and slaughter of young girls and infants. 14 Within the total of three days eighty thousand were destroyed, forty thousand in hand-to-hand fighting, and as many were sold into slavery as were killed.

15 Not content with this, Antiochus dared to enter the most holy temple in all the world, guided by Menelaus, who had become a traitor
both to the laws and to his country. 16 He took the holy vessels with his polluted hands, and swept away with profane hands the votive offerings that other kings had made to enhance the glory and honor of the place. 17 Antiochus was elated in spirit, and did not perceive that the Lord was angered for a little while because of the sins of those who lived in the city, and that this was the reason he was disregarding the holy place. 18 But if it had not happened that they were involved in many sins, this man would have been flogged and turned back from his rash act as soon as he came forward, just as Heliodorus had been, whom King Seleucus sent to inspect the treasury. 19 But the Lord did not choose the nation for the sake of the holy place, but the place for the sake of the nation. 20 Therefore the place itself shared in the misfortunes that befell the nation and afterward participated in its benefits; and what was forsaken in the wrath of the Almighty was restored again in all its glory when the great Lord became reconciled.

21 So Antiochus carried off eighteen hundred talents from the temple, and hurried away to Antioch, thinking in his arrogance that he could sail on the land and walk on the sea, because his mind was elated. 22 He left governors to oppress the people: at Jerusalem, Philip, by birth a Phrygian and in character more barbarous than the man who appointed him; 23 and at Gerizim, Andronicus; and besides these Menelaus, who lorded it over his compatriots worse than the others did. In his malice toward the Jewish citizens, 24 Antiochus sent Apollonius, the captain of the Mysians, with an army of twenty-two thousand, and commanded him to kill all the grown men and to sell the women and boys as slaves. 25 When this man arrived in Jerusalem, he pretended to be peaceably disposed and waited until the holy sabbath day; then, finding the Jews not at work, he ordered his troops to parade under arms. 26 He put to the sword all those who came out to see them, then rushed into the city with his armed warriors and killed great numbers of people.

27 But Judas Maccabeus, with about nine others, got away to the wilderness, and kept himself and his companions alive in the mountains as wild animals do; they continued to live on what grew wild, so that they might not share in the defilement.
[2 Maccabees 6]
Campaign against Judaism

1 Not long after this, the king sent an Athenian senator to compel the Jews to forsake the laws of their ancestors and no longer to live by the laws of God; 2 also to pollute the temple in Jerusalem and to call it the temple of Olympian Zeus, and to call the one in Gerizim the temple of Zeus-the-Friend-of-Strangers, as did the people who lived in that place.

3 Harsh and utterly grievous was the onslaught of evil. 4 For the temple was filled with debauchery and reveling by the Gentiles, who dallied with prostitutes and had intercourse with women within the sacred precincts, and besides brought in things for sacrifice that were unfit. 5 The altar was covered with abominable offerings that were forbidden by the laws. 6 People could neither keep the sabbath, nor observe the festivals of their ancestors, nor so much as confess themselves to be Jews.

The first martyrdoms

7 On the monthly celebration of the king's birthday, the Jews were taken, under bitter constraint, to partake of the sacrifices; and when a festival of Dionysus was celebrated, they were compelled to wear wreaths of ivy and to walk in the procession in honor of Dionysus. 8 At the suggestion of the people of Ptolemais a decree was issued to the neighboring Greek cities that they should adopt the same policy toward the Jews and make them partake of the sacrifices, 9 and should kill those who did not choose to change over to Greek customs. One could see, therefore, the misery that had come upon them. 10 For example, two women were brought in for having circumcised their children. They publicly paraded them around the city, with their babies hanging at their breasts, and then hurled them down headlong from the wall. 11 Others who had assembled in the caves nearby, in order to observe the seventh day secretly, were betrayed to Philip and were all burned together, because their piety kept them from defending themselves, in view of their regard for that most holy day.
12 Now I urge those who read this book not to be depressed by such calamities, but to recognize that these punishments were designed not to destroy but to discipline our people. 13 In fact, it is a sign of great kindness not to let the impious alone for long, but to punish them immediately. 14 For in the case of the other nations the Lord waits patiently to punish them until they have reached the full measure of their sins; but he does not deal in this way with us, 15 in order that he may not take vengeance on us afterward when our sins have reached their height. 16 Therefore he never withdraws his mercy from us. Although he disciplines us with calamities, he does not forsake his own people. 17 Let what we have said serve as a reminder; we must go on briefly with the story.

**Martyrdom of Eleazar**

18 Eleazar, one of the scribes in high position, a man now advanced in age and of noble presence, was being forced to open his mouth to eat swine's flesh. 19 But he, welcoming death with honor rather than life with pollution, went up to the rack of his own accord, spitting out the flesh, 20 as all ought to go who have the courage to refuse things that it is not right to taste, even for the natural love of life.

21 Those who were in charge of that unlawful sacrifice took the man aside because of their long acquaintance with him, and privately urged him to bring meat of his own providing, proper for him to use, and to pretend that he was eating the flesh of the sacrificial meal that had been commanded by the king, 22 so that by doing this he might be saved from death, and be treated kindly on account of his old friendship with them. 23 But making a high resolve, worthy of his years and the dignity of his old age and the gray hairs that he had reached with distinction and his excellent life even from childhood, and moreover according to the holy God-given law, he declared himself quickly, telling them to send him to Hades.

24 "Such pretense is not worthy of our time of life," he said, "for many of the young might suppose that Eleazar in his ninetieth year had gone over to an alien religion, 25 and through my pretense, for the sake of living a brief moment longer, they would be led astray because of me,
while I defile and disgrace my old age. 26 Even if for the present I would avoid the punishment of mortals, yet whether I live or die I will not escape the hands of the Almighty. 27 Therefore, by bravely giving up my life now, I will show myself worthy of my old age 28 and leave to the young a noble example of how to die a good death willingly and nobly for the revered and holy laws."

When he had said this, he went at once to the rack. 29 Those who a little before had acted toward him with goodwill now changed to ill will, because the words he had uttered were in their opinion sheer madness. 30 When he was about to die under the blows, he groaned aloud and said: "It is clear to the Lord in his holy knowledge that, though I might have been saved from death, I am enduring terrible sufferings in my body under this beating, but in my soul I am glad to suffer these things because I fear him."

31 So in this way he died, leaving in his death an example of nobility and a memorial of courage, not only to the young but to the great body of his nation.

[2 Maccabees 7]
Martyrdom of seven brothers and their mother

1 It happened also that seven brothers and their mother were arrested and were being compelled by the king, under torture with whips and thongs, to partake of unlawful swine's flesh. 2 One of them, acting as their spokesman, said, "What do you intend to ask and learn from us? For we are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our ancestors."

3 The king fell into a rage, and gave orders to have pans and caldrons heated. 4 These were heated immediately, and he commanded that the tongue of their spokesman be cut out and that they scalp him and cut off his hands and feet, while the rest of the brothers and the mother looked on. 5 When he was utterly helpless, the king ordered them to take him to the fire, still breathing, and to fry him in a pan. The smoke from the pan spread widely, but the brothers and their mother encouraged one another to die nobly, saying, 6 "The Lord God
is watching over us and in truth has compassion on us, as Moses declared in his song that bore witness against the people to their faces, when he said, 'And he will have compassion on his servants.'"

7 After the first brother had died in this way, they brought forward the second for their sport. They tore off the skin of his head with the hair, and asked him, "Will you eat rather than have your body punished limb by limb?" 8 He replied in the language of his ancestors and said to them, "No." Therefore he in turn underwent tortures as the first brother had done. 9 And when he was at his last breath, he said, "You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws."

10 After him, the third was the victim of their sport. When it was demanded, he quickly put out his tongue and courageously stretched forth his hands, 11 and said nobly, "I got these from Heaven, and because of his laws I disdain them, and from him I hope to get them back again." 12 As a result the king himself and those with him were astonished at the young man's spirit, for he regarded his sufferings as nothing.

13 After he too had died, they maltreated and tortured the fourth in the same way. 14 When he was near death, he said, "One cannot but choose to die at the hands of mortals and to cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him. But for you there will be no resurrection to life!"

15 Next they brought forward the fifth and maltreated him. 16 But he looked at the king, and said, "Because you have authority among mortals, though you also are mortal, you do what you please. But do not think that God has forsaken our people. 17 Keep on, and see how his mighty power will torture you and your descendants!"

18 After him they brought forward the sixth. And when he was about to die, he said, "Do not deceive yourself in vain. For we are suffering these things on our own account, because of our sins against our own
God. Therefore astounding things have happened. 19 But do not think that you will go unpunished for having tried to fight against God!"

20 The mother was especially admirable and worthy of honorable memory. Although she saw her seven sons perish within a single day, she bore it with good courage because of her hope in the Lord. 21 She encouraged each of them in the language of their ancestors. Filled with a noble spirit, she reinforced her woman's reasoning with a man's courage, and said to them, 22 "I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. 23 Therefore the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of humankind and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws."

24 Antiochus felt that he was being treated with contempt, and he was suspicious of her reproachful tone. The youngest brother being still alive, Antiochus not only appealed to him in words, but promised with oaths that he would make him rich and enviable if he would turn from the ways of his ancestors, and that he would take him for his Friend and entrust him with public affairs. 25 Since the young man would not listen to him at all, the king called the mother to him and urged her to advise the youth to save himself. 26 After much urging on his part, she undertook to persuade her son. 27 But, leaning close to him, she spoke in their native language as follows, deriding the cruel tyrant: "My son, have pity on me. I carried you nine months in my womb, and nursed you for three years, and have reared you and brought you up to this point in your life, and have taken care of you. 28 I beg you, my child, to look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. And in the same way the human race came into being. 29 Do not fear this butcher, but prove worthy of your brothers. Accept death, so that in God's mercy I may get you back again along with your brothers."

30 While she was still speaking, the young man said, "What are you waiting for? I will not obey the king's command, but I obey the command of the law that was given to our ancestors through Moses. 31 But you, who have contrived all sorts of evil against the Hebrews, will
certainly not escape the hands of God. 32 For we are suffering because of our own sins. 33 And if our living Lord is angry for a little while, to rebuke and discipline us, he will again be reconciled with his own servants. 34 But you, unholy wretch, you most defiled of all mortals, do not be elated in vain and puffed up by uncertain hopes, when you raise your hand against the children of heaven. 35 You have not yet escaped the judgment of the almighty, all-seeing God. 36 For our brothers after enduring a brief suffering have drunk of ever-flowing life, under God's covenant; but you, by the judgment of God, will receive just punishment for your arrogance. 37 I, like my brothers, give up body and life for the laws of our ancestors, appealing to God to show mercy soon to our nation and by trials and plagues to make you confess that he alone is God, 38 and through me and my brothers to bring to an end the wrath of the Almighty that has justly fallen on our whole nation."

39 The king fell into a rage, and handled him worse than the others, being exasperated at his scorn. 40 So he died in his integrity, putting his whole trust in the Lord.

41 Last of all, the mother died, after her sons.

42 Let this be enough, then, about the eating of sacrifices and the extreme tortures.

[2 Maccabees 8]
Judas Maccabeus begins the revolt

1 Meanwhile Judas, who was also called Maccabeus, and his companions secretly entered the villages and summoned their kindred and enlisted those who had continued in the Jewish faith, and so they gathered about six thousand. 2 They implored the Lord to look upon the people who were oppressed by all; and to have pity on the temple that had been profaned by the godless; 3 to have mercy on the city that was being destroyed and about to be leveled to the ground; to hearken to the blood that cried out to him; 4 to remember also the lawless destruction of the innocent babies and the blasphemies committed against his name; and to show his hatred of evil.
5 As soon as Maccabeus got his army organized, the Gentiles could not withstand him, for the wrath of the Lord had turned to mercy. 6 Coming without warning, he would set fire to towns and villages. He captured strategic positions and put to flight not a few of the enemy. 7 He found the nights most advantageous for such attacks. And talk of his valor spread everywhere.

First victory over Nicanor

8 When Philip saw that the man was gaining ground little by little, and that he was pushing ahead with more frequent successes, he wrote to Ptolemy, the governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, to come to the aid of the king's government. 9 Then Ptolemy promptly appointed Nicanor son of Patroclus, one of the king's chief Friends, and sent him, in command of no fewer than twenty thousand Gentiles of all nations, to wipe out the whole race of Judea. He associated with him Gorgias, a general and a man of experience in military service. 10 Nicanor determined to make up for the king the tribute due to the Romans, two thousand talents, by selling the captured Jews into slavery. 11 So he immediately sent to the towns on the seacoast, inviting them to buy Jewish slaves and promising to hand over ninety slaves for a talent, not expecting the judgment from the Almighty that was about to overtake him.

12 Word came to Judas concerning Nicanor's invasion; and when he told his companions of the arrival of the army, 13 those who were cowardly and distrustful of God's justice ran off and got away. 14 Others sold all their remaining property, and at the same time implored the Lord to rescue those who had been sold by the ungodly Nicanor before he ever met them, 15 if not for their own sake, then for the sake of the covenants made with their ancestors, and because he had called them by his holy and glorious name. 16 But Maccabeus gathered his forces together, to the number six thousand, and exhorted them not to be frightened by the enemy and not to fear the great multitude of Gentiles who were wickedly coming against them, but to fight nobly, 17 keeping before their eyes the lawless outrage that the Gentiles had committed against the holy place, and the torture of the derided city, and besides, the overthrow of their
ancestral way of life. 18 "For they trust to arms and acts of daring," he said, "but we trust in the Almighty God, who is able with a single nod to strike down those who are coming against us, and even, if necessary, the whole world."

19 Moreover, he told them of the occasions when help came to their ancestors; how, in the time of Sennacherib, when one hundred eighty-five thousand perished, 20 and the time of the battle against the Galatians that took place in Babylonia, when eight thousand Jews fought along with four thousand Macedonians; yet when the Macedonians were hard pressed, the eight thousand, by the help that came to them from heaven, destroyed one hundred twenty thousand Galatians and took a great amount of booty.

21 With these words he filled them with courage and made them ready to die for their laws and their country; then he divided his army into four parts. 22 He appointed his brothers also, Simon and Joseph and Jonathan, each to command a division, putting fifteen hundred men under each. 23 Besides, he appointed Eleazar to read aloud from the holy book, and gave the watchword, "The help of God"; then, leading the first division himself, he joined battle with Nicanor.

24 With the Almighty as their ally, they killed more than nine thousand of the enemy, and wounded and disabled most of Nicanor's army, and forced them all to flee. 25 They captured the money of those who had come to buy them as slaves. After pursuing them for some distance, they were obliged to return because the hour was late. 26 It was the day before the sabbath, and for that reason they did not continue their pursuit. 27 When they had collected the arms of the enemy and stripped them of their spoils, they kept the sabbath, giving great praise and thanks to the Lord, who had preserved them for that day and allotted it to them as the beginning of mercy. 28 After the sabbath they gave some of the spoils to those who had been tortured and to the widows and orphans, and distributed the rest among themselves and their children. 29 When they had done this, they made common supplication and implored the merciful Lord to be wholly reconciled with his servants.
Other victories

30 In encounters with the forces of Timothy and Bacchides they killed more than twenty thousand of them and got possession of some exceedingly high strongholds, and they divided a very large amount of plunder, giving to those who had been tortured and to the orphans and widows, and also to the aged, shares equal to their own. 31 They collected the arms of the enemy, and carefully stored all of them in strategic places; the rest of the spoils they carried to Jerusalem. 32 They killed the commander of Timothy's forces, a most wicked man, and one who had greatly troubled the Jews. 33 While they were celebrating the victory in the city of their ancestors, they burned those who had set fire to the sacred gates, Callisthenes and some others, who had fled into one little house; so these received the proper reward for their impiety.

34 The thrice-accursed Nicanor, who had brought the thousand merchants to buy the Jews, 35 having been humbled with the help of the Lord by opponents whom he regarded as of the least account, took off his splendid uniform and made his way alone like a runaway slave across the country until he reached Antioch, having succeeded chiefly in the destruction of his own army! 36 So he who had undertaken to secure tribute for the Romans by the capture of the people of Jerusalem proclaimed that the Jews had a Defender, and that therefore the Jews were invulnerable, because they followed the laws ordained by him.

[2 Maccabees 9]
The illness of Antiochus

1 About that time, as it happened, Antiochus had retreated in disorder from the region of Persia. 2 He had entered the city called Persepolis and attempted to rob the temples and control the city. Therefore the people rushed to the rescue with arms, and Antiochus and his army were defeated, with the result that Antiochus was put to flight by the inhabitants and beat a shameful retreat. 3 While he was in Ecbatana, news came to him of what had happened to Nicanor and the forces of Timothy. 4 Transported with rage, he conceived the idea of turning upon the Jews the injury done by those who had put him to flight; so
he ordered his charioteer to drive without stopping until he completed the journey. But the judgment of heaven rode with him! For in his arrogance he said, "When I get there I will make Jerusalem a cemetery of Jews."

5 But the all-seeing Lord, the God of Israel, struck him with an incurable and invisible blow. As soon as he stopped speaking he was seized with a pain in his bowels, for which there was no relief, and with sharp internal tortures — 6 and that very justly, for he had tortured the bowels of others with many and strange inflictions. 7 Yet he did not in any way stop his insolence, but was even more filled with arrogance, breathing fire in his rage against the Jews, and giving orders to drive even faster. And so it came about that he fell out of his chariot as it was rushing along, and the fall was so hard as to torture every limb of his body. 8 Thus he who only a little while before had thought in his superhuman arrogance that he could command the waves of the sea, and had imagined that he could weigh the high mountains in a balance, was brought down to earth and carried in a litter, making the power of God manifest to all. 9 And so the ungodly man's body swarmed with worms, and while he was still living in anguish and pain, his flesh rotted away, and because of the stench the whole army felt revulsion at his decay. 10 Because of his intolerable stench no one was able to carry the man who a little while before had thought that he could touch the stars of heaven. 11 Then it was that, broken in spirit, he began to lose much of his arrogance and to come to his senses under the scourge of God, for he was tortured with pain every moment. 12 And when he could not endure his own stench, he uttered these words, "It is right to be subject to God; mortals should not think that they are equal to God."

Repentance and death of Antiochus

13 Then the abominable fellow made a vow to the Lord, who would no longer have mercy on him, stating 14 that the holy city, which he was hurrying to level to the ground and to make a cemetery, he was now declaring to be free; 15 and the Jews, whom he had not considered worth burying but had planned to throw out with their children for the wild animals and for the birds to eat, he would make, all of them,
equal to citizens of Athens; and the holy sanctuary, which he had formerly plundered, he would adorn with the finest offerings; and all the holy vessels he would give back, many times over; and the expenses incurred for the sacrifices he would provide from his own revenues; and in addition to all this he also would become a Jew and would visit every inhabited place to proclaim the power of God. But when his sufferings did not in any way abate, for the judgment of God had justly come upon him, he gave up all hope for himself and wrote to the Jews the following letter, in the form of a supplication. This was its content:

"To his worthy Jewish citizens, Antiochus their king and general sends hearty greetings and good wishes for their health and prosperity. If you and your children are well and your affairs are as you wish, I am glad. As my hope is in heaven, I remember with affection your esteem and goodwill. On my way back from the region of Persia I suffered an annoying illness, and I have deemed it necessary to take thought for the general security of all. I do not despair of my condition, for I have good hope of recovering from my illness, but I observed that my father, on the occasions when he made expeditions into the upper country, appointed his successor, so that, if anything unexpected happened or any unwelcome news came, the people throughout the realm would not be troubled, for they would know to whom the government was left. Moreover, I understand how the princes along the borders and the neighbors of my kingdom keep watching for opportunities and waiting to see what will happen. So I have appointed my son Antiochus to be king, whom I have often entrusted and commended to most of you when I hurried off to the upper provinces; and I have written to him what is written here. Therefore urge and beg you to remember the public and private services rendered to you and to maintain your present goodwill, each of you, toward me and my son. For I am sure that he will follow my policy and will treat you with moderation and kindness."

So the murderer and blasphemer, having endured the more intense suffering, such as he had inflicted on others, came to the end of his life by a most pitiable fate, among the mountains in a strange land. And Philip, one of his courtiers, took his body home; then, fearing the son of Antiochus, he withdrew to Ptolemy Philometor in Egypt.
[2 Maccabees 10]

Purification of the Temple

1 Now Maccabeus and his followers, the Lord leading them on, recovered the temple and the city; 2 they tore down the altars that had been built in the public square by the foreigners, and also destroyed the sacred precincts. 3 They purified the sanctuary, and made another altar of sacrifice; then, striking fire out of flint, they offered sacrifices, after a lapse of two years, and they offered incense and lighted lamps and set out the bread of the Presence. 4 When they had done this, they fell prostrate and implored the Lord that they might never again fall into such misfortunes, but that, if they should ever sin, they might be disciplined by him with forbearance and not be handed over to blasphemous and barbarous nations. 5 It happened that on the same day on which the sanctuary had been profaned by the foreigners, the purification of the sanctuary took place, that is, on the twenty-fifth day of the same month, which was Chislev. 6 They celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of the festival of booths, remembering how not long before, during the festival of booths, they had been wandering in the mountains and caves like wild animals. 7 Therefore, carrying ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fronds of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place. 8 They decreed by public edict, ratified by vote, that the whole nation of the Jews should observe these days every year.

9 Such then was the end of Antiochus, who was called Epiphanes.

Accession of Antiochus V Eupator and Ptolemy Macron

10 Now we will tell what took place under Antiochus Eupator, who was the son of that ungodly man, and will give a brief summary of the principal calamities of the wars. 11 This man, when he succeeded to the kingdom, appointed one Lysias to have charge of the government and to be chief governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia. 12 Ptolemy, who was called Macron, took the lead in showing justice to the Jews because of the wrong that had been done to them, and attempted to maintain peaceful relations with them. 13 As a result he was accused before
Eupator by the king's Friends. He heard himself called a traitor at every turn, because he had abandoned Cyprus, which Philometor had entrusted to him, and had gone over to Antiochus Epiphanes. Unable to command the respect due his office, he took poison and ended his life.

Attacks on the Idumeans

14 When Gorgias became governor of the region, he maintained a force of mercenaries, and at every turn kept attacking the Jews. 15 Besides this, the Idumeans, who had control of important strongholds, were harassing the Jews; they received those who were banished from Jerusalem, and endeavored to keep up the war. 16 But Maccabeus and his forces, after making solemn supplication and imploring God to fight on their side, rushed to the strongholds of the Idumeans. 17 Attacking them vigorously, they gained possession of the places, and beat off all who fought upon the wall, and slaughtered those whom they encountered, killing no fewer than twenty thousand.

18 When at least nine thousand took refuge in two very strong towers well equipped to withstand a siege, 19 Maccabeus left Simon and Joseph, and also Zacchaeus and his troops, a force sufficient to besiege them; and he himself set off for places where he was more urgently needed. 20 But those with Simon, who were money-hungry, were bribed by some of those who were in the towers, and on receiving seventy thousand drachmas let some of them slip away. 21 When word of what had happened came to Maccabeus, he gathered the leaders of the people, and accused these men of having sold their kindred for money by setting their enemies free to fight against them. 22 Then he killed these men who had turned traitor, and immediately captured the two towers. 23 Having success at arms in everything he undertook, he destroyed more than twenty thousand in the two strongholds.

Victory over Timothy

24 Now Timothy, who had been defeated by the Jews before, gathered a tremendous force of mercenaries and collected the cavalry from Asia in no small number. He came on, intending to take Judea by storm. 25
As he drew near, Maccabeus and his men sprinkled dust on their heads and girded their loins with sackcloth, in supplication to God. 26 Falling upon the steps before the altar, they implored him to be gracious to them and to be an enemy to their enemies and an adversary to their adversaries, as the law declares. 27 And rising from their prayer they took up their arms and advanced a considerable distance from the city; and when they came near the enemy they halted. 28 Just as dawn was breaking, the two armies joined battle, the one having as pledge of success and victory not only their valor but also their reliance on the Lord, while the other made rage their leader in the fight.

29 When the battle became fierce, there appeared to the enemy from heaven five resplendent men on horses with golden bridles, and they were leading the Jews. 30 Two of them took Maccabeus between them, and shielding him with their own armor and weapons, they kept him from being wounded. They showered arrows and thunderbolts on the enemy, so that, confused and blinded, they were thrown into disorder and cut to pieces. 31 Twenty thousand five hundred were slaughtered, besides six hundred cavalry.

32 Timothy himself fled to a stronghold called Gazara, especially well garrisoned, where Chaereas was commander. 33 Then Maccabeus and his men were glad, and they besieged the fort for four days. 34 The men within, relying on the strength of the place, kept blaspheming terribly and uttering wicked words. 35 But at dawn of the fifth day, twenty young men in the army of Maccabeus, fired with anger because of the blasphemies, bravely stormed the wall and with savage fury cut down everyone they met. 36 Others who came up in the same way wheeled around against the defenders and set fire to the towers; they kindled fires and burned the blasphemers alive. Others broke open the gates and let in the rest of the force, and they occupied the city. 37 They killed Timothy, who was hiding in a cistern, and his brother Chaereas, and Apollopaphanes. 38 When they had accomplished these things, with hymns and thanksgivings they blessed the Lord who shows great kindness to Israel and gives them the victory.
[2 Maccabees 11]
Victory over Lysias at Beth-zur

1 Very soon after this, Lysias, the king's guardian and kinsman, who was in charge of the government, being vexed at what had happened, gathered about eighty thousand infantry and all his cavalry and came against the Jews. He intended to make the city a home for Greeks, and to levy tribute on the temple as he did on the sacred places of the other nations, and to put up the high priesthood for sale every year. 4 He took no account whatever of the power of God, but was elated with his ten thousands of infantry, and his thousands of cavalry, and his eighty elephants. 5 Invading Judea, he approached Beth-zur, which was a fortified place about five stadia from Jerusalem, and pressed it hard.

6 When Maccabeus and his men got word that Lysias was besieging the strongholds, they and all the people, with lamentations and tears, prayed the Lord to send a good angel to save Israel. 7 Maccabeus himself was the first to take up arms, and he urged the others to risk their lives with him to aid their kindred. Then they eagerly rushed off together. 8 And there, while they were still near Jerusalem, a horseman appeared at their head, clothed in white and brandishing weapons of gold. 9 And together they all praised the merciful God, and were strengthened in heart, ready to assail not only humans but the wildest animals or walls of iron. 10 They advanced in battle order, having their heavenly ally, for the Lord had mercy on them. 11 They hurled themselves like lions against the enemy, and laid low eleven thousand of them and sixteen hundred cavalry, and forced all the rest to flee. 12 Most of them got away stripped and wounded, and Lysias himself escaped by disgraceful flight.

13 As he was not without intelligence, he pondered over the defeat that had befallen him, and realized that the Hebrews were invincible because the mighty God fought on their side. So he sent to them and persuaded them to settle everything on just terms, promising that he would persuade the king, constraining him to be their friend. 15 Maccabeus, having regard for the common good, agreed to all that
Lysias urged. For the king granted every request in behalf of the Jews which Maccabeus delivered to Lysias in writing.

Letters of Lysias, Antiochus V, and the Romans

16 The letter written to the Jews by Lysias was to this effect:
"Lysias to the people of the Jews, greetings. 17 John and Absalom, who were sent by you, have delivered your signed communication and have asked about the matters indicated in it. 18 I have informed the king of everything that needed to be brought before him, and he has agreed to what was possible. 19 If you will maintain your goodwill toward the government, I will endeavor in the future to help promote your welfare. 20 And concerning such matters and their details, I have ordered these men and my representatives to confer with you. 21 Farewell. The one hundred forty-eighth year, Dioscorinthius twenty-fourth."

22 The king's letter ran thus:
"King Antiochus to his brother Lysias, greetings. 23 Now that our father has gone on to the gods, we desire that the subjects of the kingdom be undisturbed in caring for their own affairs. 24 We have heard that the Jews do not consent to our father's change to Greek customs, but prefer their own way of living and ask that their own customs be allowed them. 25 Accordingly, since we choose that this nation also should be free from disturbance, our decision is that their temple be restored to them and that they shall live according to the customs of their ancestors. 26 You will do well, therefore, to send word to them and give them pledges of friendship, so that they may know our policy and be of good cheer and go on happily in the conduct of their own affairs."

27 To the nation the king's letter was as follows:
"King Antiochus to the senate of the Jews and to the other Jews, greetings. 28 If you are well, it is as we desire. We also are in good health. 29 Menelaus has informed us that you wish to return home and look after your own affairs. 30 Therefore those who go home by the thirtieth of Xanthicus will have our pledge of friendship and full permission 31 for the Jews to enjoy their own food and laws, just as
formerly, and none of them shall be molested in any way for what may have been done in ignorance. 32 And I have also sent Menelaus to encourage you. 33 Farewell. The one hundred forty-eighth year, Xanthicus fifteenth."

34 The Romans also sent them a letter, which read thus: "Quintus Memmius and Titus Manius, envoys of the Romans, to the people of the Jews, greetings. 35 With regard to what Lysias the kinsman of the king has granted you, we also give consent. 36 But as to the matters that he decided are to be referred to the king, as soon as you have considered them, send some one promptly so that we may make proposals appropriate for you. For we are on our way to Antioch. 37 Therefore make haste and send messengers so that we may have your judgment. 38 Farewell. The one hundred forty-eighth year, Xanthicus fifteenth."

[2 Maccabees 12]
Attacks on Joppa, Jamnia, and Caspin

1 When this agreement had been reached, Lysias returned to the king, and the Jews went about their farming.

2 But some of the governors in various places, Timothy and Apollonius son of Gennaeus, as well as Hieronymus and Demophon, and in addition to these Nicanor the governor of Cyprus, would not let them live quietly and in peace. 3 And the people of Joppa did so ungodly a deed as this: they invited the Jews who lived among them to embark, with their wives and children, on boats that they had provided, as though there were no ill will to the Jews; 4 and this was done by public vote of the city. When they accepted, because they wished to live peaceably and suspected nothing, the people of Joppa took them out to sea and drowned them, at least two hundred. 5 When Judas heard of the cruelty visited on his compatriots, he gave orders to his men 6 and, calling upon God, the righteous judge, attacked the murderers of his kindred. He set fire to the harbor by night, burned the boats, and massacred those who had taken refuge there. 7 Then, because the city's gates were closed, he withdrew, intending to come again and root out the whole community of Joppa. 8 But learning that the
people in Jamnia meant in the same way to wipe out the Jews who were living among them, 9 he attacked the Jamnites by night and set fire to the harbor and the fleet, so that the glow of the light was seen in Jerusalem, thirty miles distant.

10 When they had gone more than a mile from there, on their march against Timothy, at least five thousand Arabs with five hundred cavalry attacked them. 11 After a hard fight, Judas and his companions, with God's help, were victorious. The defeated nomads begged Judas to grant them pledges of friendship, promising to give him livestock and to help his people in all other ways. 12 Judas, realizing that they might indeed be useful in many ways, agreed to make peace with them; and after receiving his pledges they went back to their tents.

13 He also attacked a certain town that was strongly fortified with earthworks and walls, and inhabited by all sorts of Gentiles. Its name was Caspin. 14 Those who were within, relying on the strength of the walls and on their supply of provisions, behaved most insolently toward Judas and his men, railing at them and even blaspheming and saying unholy things. 15 But Judas and his men, calling upon the great Sovereign of the world, who without battering rams or engines of war overthrew Jericho in the days of Joshua, rushed furiously upon the walls. 16 They took the town by the will of God, and slaughtered untold numbers, so that the adjoining lake, a quarter of a mile wide, appeared to be running over with blood.

Battles in the northeast

17 When they had gone ninety-five miles from there, they came to Charax, to the Jews who are called Toubiani. 18 They did not find Timothy in that region, for he had by then left there without accomplishing anything, though in one place he had left a very strong garrison. 19 Dositheus and Sosipater, who were captains under Maccabeus, marched out and destroyed those whom Timothy had left in the stronghold, more than ten thousand men. 20 But Maccabeus arranged his army in divisions, set men in command of the divisions, and hurried after Timothy, who had with him one hundred twenty thousand infantry and two thousand five hundred cavalry. 21 When
Timothy learned of the approach of Judas, he sent off the women and the children and also the baggage to a place called Carnaim; for that place was hard to besiege and difficult of access because of the narrowness of all the approaches. 22 But when Judas's first division appeared, terror and fear came over the enemy at the manifestation to them of him who sees all things. In their flight they rushed headlong in every direction, so that often they were injured by their own men and pierced by the points of their own swords. 23 Judas pressed the pursuit with the utmost vigor, putting the sinners to the sword, and destroyed as many as thirty thousand.

24 Timothy himself fell into the hands of Dositheus and Sosipater and their men. With great guile he begged them to let him go in safety, because he held the parents of most of them, and the brothers of some, to whom no consideration would be shown. 25 And when with many words he had confirmed his solemn promise to restore them unharmed, they let him go, for the sake of saving their kindred.

26 Then Judas marched against Carnaim and the temple of Atargatis, and slaughtered twenty-five thousand people. 27 After the rout and destruction of these, he marched also against Ephron, a fortified town where Lysias lived with multitudes of people of all nationalities. Stalwart young men took their stand before the walls and made a vigorous defense; and great stores of war engines and missiles were there. 28 But the Jews called upon the Sovereign who with power shatters the might of his enemies, and they got the town into their hands, and killed as many as twenty-five thousand of those who were in it.

29 Setting out from there, they hastened to Scythopolis, which is seventy-five miles from Jerusalem. 30 But when the Jews who lived there bore witness to the goodwill that the people of Scythopolis had shown them and their kind treatment of them in times of misfortune, 31 they thanked them and exhorted them to be well disposed to their race in the future also. Then they went up to Jerusalem, as the festival of weeks was close at hand.
Battle with Gorgias

32 After the festival called Pentecost, they hurried against Gorgias, the governor of Idumea, who came out with three thousand infantry and four hundred cavalry. 34 When they joined battle, it happened that a few of the Jews fell. 35 But a certain Dositheus, one of Bacenor's men, who was on horseback and was a strong man, caught hold of Gorgias, and grasping his cloak was dragging him off by main strength, wishing to take the accursed man alive, when one of the Thracian cavalry bore down on him and cut off his arm; so Gorgias escaped and reached Marisa.

36 As Esdris and his men had been fighting for a long time and were weary, Judas called upon the Lord to show himself their ally and leader in the battle. 37 In the language of their ancestors he raised the battle cry, with hymns; then he charged against Gorgias's troops when they were not expecting it, and put them to flight.

Prayers for the dead

38 Then Judas assembled his army and went to the city of Adullam. As the seventh day was coming on, they purified themselves according to the custom, and kept the sabbath there.

39 On the next day, as had now become necessary, Judas and his men went to take up the bodies of the fallen and to bring them back to lie with their kindred in the sepulchres of their ancestors. 40 Then under the tunic of each one of the dead they found sacred tokens of the idols of Jamnia, which the law forbids the Jews to wear. And it became clear to all that this was the reason these men had fallen. 41 So they all blessed the ways of the Lord, the righteous judge, who reveals the things that are hidden; 42 and they turned to supplication, praying that the sin that had been committed might be wholly blotted out. The noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened as the result of the sin of those who had fallen. 43 He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well
and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. 44 For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. 45 But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin.

[2 Maccabees 13]
Death of Menelaus

1 In the one hundred forty-ninth year word came to Judas and his men that Antiochus Eupator was coming with a great army against Judea, and with him Lysias, his guardian, who had charge of the government. Each of them had a Greek force of one hundred ten thousand infantry, five thousand three hundred cavalry, twenty-two elephants, and three hundred chariots armed with scythes.

3 Menelaus also joined them and with utter hypocrisy urged Antiochus on, not for the sake of his country's welfare, but because he thought that he would be established in office. 4 But the King of kings aroused the anger of Antiochus against the scoundrel; and when Lysias informed him that this man was to blame for all the trouble, he ordered them to take him to Beroea and to put him to death by the method that is customary in that place. 5 For there is a tower there, fifty cubits high, full of ashes, and it has a rim running around it that on all sides inclines precipitously into the ashes. 6 There they all push to destruction anyone guilty of sacrilege or notorious for other crimes. 7 By such a fate it came about that Menelaus the lawbreaker died, without even burial in the earth. 8 And this was eminently just; because he had committed many sins against the altar whose fire and ashes were holy, he met his death in ashes.

Preliminary skirmish

9 The king with barbarous arrogance was coming to show the Jews things far worse than those that had been done in his father's time. 10 But when Judas heard of this, he ordered the people to call upon the
Lord day and night, now if ever to help those who were on the point of being deprived of the law and their country and the holy temple, and not to let the people who had just begun to revive fall into the hands of the blasphemous Gentiles. When they had all joined in the same petition and had implored the merciful Lord with weeping and fasting and lying prostrate for three days without ceasing, Judas exhorted them and ordered them to stand ready.

13 After consulting privately with the elders, he determined to march out and decide the matter by the help of God before the king's army could enter Judea and get possession of the city. 14 So, committing the decision to the Creator of the world and exhorting his troops to fight bravely to the death for the laws, temple, city, country, and commonwealth, he pitched his camp near Modein. 15 He gave his troops the watchword, "God's victory," and with a picked force of the bravest young men, he attacked the king's pavilion at night and killed as many as two thousand men in the camp. He stabbed the leading elephant and its rider. 16 In the end they filled the camp with terror and confusion and withdrew in triumph. 17 This happened, just as day was dawning, because the LORD's help protected him.

**Attack on Beth-zur**

18 The king, having had a taste of the daring of the Jews, tried strategy in attacking their positions. 19 He advanced against Beth-zur, a strong fortress of the Jews, was turned back, attacked again, and was defeated. 20 Judas sent in to the garrison whatever was necessary. 21 But Rhodocus, a man from the ranks of the Jews, gave secret information to the enemy; he was sought for, caught, and put in prison. 22 The king negotiated a second time with the people in Beth-zur, gave pledges, received theirs, withdrew, attacked Judas and his men, was defeated; 23 he got word that Philip, who had been left in charge of the government, had revolted in Antioch; he was dismayed, called in the Jews, yielded and swore to observe all their rights, settled with them and offered sacrifice, honored the sanctuary and showed generosity to the holy place. 24 He received Maccabeus, left Hegemonides as governor from Ptolemais to Gerar, 25 and went to Ptolemais. The people of Ptolemais were indignant over the treaty; in
fact they were so angry that they wanted to annul its terms. 26 Lysias took the public platform, made the best possible defense, convinced them, appeased them, gained their goodwill, and set out for Antioch. This is how the king's attack and withdrawal turned out.

[2 Maccabees 14] 
Accession of Demetrius I

1 Three years later, word came to Judas and his men that Demetrius son of Seleucus had sailed into the harbor of Tripolis with a strong army and a fleet, 2 and had taken possession of the country, having made away with Antiochus and his guardian Lysias.

3 Now a certain Alcimus, who had formerly been high priest but had willfully defiled himself in the times of separation, realized that there was no way for him to be safe or to have access again to the holy altar, 4 and went to King Demetrius in about the one hundred fifty-first year, presenting to him a crown of gold and a palm, and besides these some of the customary olive branches from the temple. During that day he kept quiet. 5 But he found an opportunity that furthered his mad purpose when he was invited by Demetrius to a meeting of the council and was asked about the attitude and intentions of the Jews. He answered:

6 "Those of the Jews who are called Hasideans, whose leader is Judas Maccabeus, are keeping up war and stirring up sedition, and will not let the kingdom attain tranquility. 7 Therefore I have laid aside my ancestral glory — I mean the high priesthood — and have now come here, 8 first because I am genuinely concerned for the interests of the king, and second because I have regard also for my compatriots. For through the folly of those whom I have mentioned our whole nation is now in no small misfortune. 9 Since you are acquainted, O king, with the details of this matter, may it please you to take thought for our country and our hard-pressed nation with the gracious kindness that you show to all. 10 For as long as Judas lives, it is impossible for the government to find peace."
Appointment of Nicanor and Alcimus

11 When he had said this, the rest of the king's Friends, who were hostile to Judas, quickly inflamed Demetrius still more. 12 He immediately chose Nicanor, who had been in command of the elephants, appointed him governor of Judea, and sent him off 13 with orders to kill Judas and scatter his troops, and to install Alcimus as high priest of the great temple. 14 And the Gentiles throughout Judea, who had fled before Judas, flocked to join Nicanor, thinking that the misfortunes and calamities of the Jews would mean prosperity for themselves.

Nicanor seeks friendship with Judas

15 When the Jews heard of Nicanor's coming and the gathering of the Gentiles, they sprinkled dust on their heads and prayed to him who established his own people forever and always upholds his own heritage by manifesting himself. 16 At the command of the leader, they set out from there immediately and engaged them in battle at a village called Dessau. 17 Simon, the brother of Judas, had encountered Nicanor, but had been temporarily checked because of the sudden consternation created by the enemy.

18 Nevertheless Nicanor, hearing of the valor of Judas and his troops and their courage in battle for their country, shrank from deciding the issue by bloodshed. 19 Therefore he sent Posidonius, Theodotus, and Mattathias to give and receive pledges of friendship. 20 When the terms had been fully considered, and the leader had informed the people, and it had appeared that they were of one mind, they agreed to the covenant. 21 The leaders set a day on which to meet by themselves. A chariot came forward from each army; seats of honor were set in place; 22 Judas posted armed men in readiness at key places to prevent sudden treachery on the part of the enemy; so they duly held the consultation.

23 Nicanor stayed on in Jerusalem and did nothing out of the way, but dismissed the flocks of people that had gathered. 24 And he kept Judas always in his presence; he was warmly attached to the man. 25 He
urged him to marry and have children; so Judas married, settled down, and shared the common life.

26 But when Alcimus noticed their goodwill for one another, he took the covenant that had been made and went to Demetrius. He told him that Nicanor was disloyal to the government, since he had appointed that conspirator against the kingdom, Judas, to be his successor. 27 The king became excited and, provoked by the false accusations of that depraved man, wrote to Nicanor, stating that he was displeased with the covenant and commanding him to send Maccabeus to Antioch as a prisoner without delay.

28 When this message came to Nicanor, he was troubled and grieved that he had to annul their agreement when the man had done no wrong. 29 Since it was not possible to oppose the king, he watched for an opportunity to accomplish this by a stratagem. 30 But Maccabeus, noticing that Nicanor was more austere in his dealings with him and was meeting him more rudely than had been his custom, concluded that this austerity did not spring from the best motives. So he gathered not a few of his men, and went into hiding from Nicanor. 31 When the latter became aware that he had been cleverly outwitted by the man, he went to the great and holy temple while the priests were offering the customary sacrifices, and commanded them to hand the man over. 32 When they declared on oath that they did not know where the man was whom he wanted, 33 he stretched out his right hand toward the sanctuary, and swore this oath: "If you do not hand Judas over to me as a prisoner, I will level this shrine of God to the ground and tear down the altar, and build here a splendid temple to Dionysus."

34 Having said this, he went away. Then the priests stretched out their hands toward heaven and called upon the constant Defender of our nation, in these words: 35 "O Lord of all, though you have need of nothing, you were pleased that there should be a temple for your habitation among us; 36 so now, O holy One, Lord of all holiness, keep undefiled forever this house that has been so recently purified."
Death of Razis

37 A certain Razis, one of the elders of Jerusalem, was denounced to Nicanor as a man who loved his compatriots and was very well thought of and for his goodwill was called father of the Jews. 38 In former times, when there was no mingling with the Gentiles, he had been accused of Judaism, and he had most zealously risked body and life for Judaism. 39 Nicanor, wishing to exhibit the enmity that he had for the Jews, sent more than five hundred soldiers to arrest him; 40 for he thought that by arresting him he would do them an injury. 41 When the troops were about to capture the tower and were forcing the door of the courtyard, they ordered that fire be brought and the doors burned. Being surrounded, Razis fell upon his own sword, 42 preferring to die nobly rather than to fall into the hands of sinners and suffer outrages unworthy of his noble birth. 43 But in the heat of the struggle he did not hit exactly, and the crowd was now rushing in through the doors. He courageously ran up on the wall, and bravely threw himself down into the crowd. 44 But as they quickly drew back, a space opened and he fell in the middle of the empty space. 45 Still alive and aflame with anger, he rose, and though his blood gushed forth and his wounds were severe he ran through the crowd; and standing upon a steep rock, 46 with his blood now completely drained from him, he tore out his entrails, took them in both hands and hurled them at the crowd, calling upon the Lord of life and spirit to give them back to him again. This was the manner of his death.

[2 Maccabees 15]

Death of Nicanor

1 When Nicanor heard that Judas and his troops were in the region of Samaria, he made plans to attack them with complete safety on the day of rest. 2 When the Jews who were compelled to follow him said, "Do not destroy so savagely and barbarously, but show respect for the day that he who sees all things has honored and hallowed above other days," 3 the thrice-accursed wretch asked if there were a sovereign in heaven who had commanded the keeping of the sabbath day. 4 When they declared, "It is the living Lord himself, the Sovereign in heaven, who ordered us to observe the seventh day," 5 he replied, "But I am a
sovereign also, on earth, and I command you to take up arms and finish the king's business." Nevertheless, he did not succeed in carrying out his abominable design.

6 This Nicanor in his utter boastfulness and arrogance had determined to erect a public monument of victory over Judas and his forces. 7 But Maccabeus did not cease to trust with all confidence that he would get help from the Lord. 8 He exhorted his troops not to fear the attack of the Gentiles, but to keep in mind the former times when help had come to them from heaven, and so to look for the victory that the Almighty would give them. 9 Encouraging them from the law and the prophets, and reminding them also of the struggles they had won, he made them the more eager. 10 When he had aroused their courage, he issued his orders, at the same time pointing out the perfidy of the Gentiles and their violation of oaths. 11 He armed each of them not so much with confidence in shields and spears as with the inspiration of brave words, and he cheered them all by relating a dream, a sort of vision, which was worthy of belief.

12 What he saw was this: Onias, who had been high priest, a noble and good man, of modest bearing and gentle manner, one who spoke fittingly and had been trained from childhood in all that belongs to excellence, was praying with outstretched hands for the whole body of the Jews. 13 Then in the same fashion another appeared, distinguished by his gray hair and dignity, and of marvelous majesty and authority. 14 And Onias spoke, saying, "This is a man who loves the family of Israel and prays much for the people and the holy city — Jeremiah, the prophet of God." 15 Jeremiah stretched out his right hand and gave to Judas a golden sword, and as he gave it he addressed him thus: 16 "Take this holy sword, a gift from God, with which you will strike down your adversaries."

17 Encouraged by the words of Judas, so noble and so effective in arousing valor and awaking courage in the souls of the young, they determined not to carry on a campaign but to attack bravely, and to decide the matter by fighting hand to hand with all courage, because the city and the sanctuary and the temple were in danger. 18 Their concern for wives and children, and also for brothers and sisters and
relatives, lay upon them less heavily; their greatest and first fear was for the consecrated sanctuary. 19 And those who had to remain in the city were in no little distress, being anxious over the encounter in the open country.

20 When all were now looking forward to the coming issue, and the enemy was already close at hand with their army drawn up for battle, the elephants strategically stationed and the cavalry deployed on the flanks, 21 Maccabeus, observing the masses that were in front of him and the varied supply of arms and the savagery of the elephants, stretched out his hands toward heaven and called upon the Lord who works wonders; for he knew that it is not by arms, but as the Lord decides, that he gains the victory for those who deserve it. 22 He called upon him in these words: "O Lord, you sent your angel in the time of King Hezekiah of Judea, and he killed fully one hundred eighty-five thousand in the camp of Sennacherib. 23 So now, O Sovereign of the heavens, send a good angel to spread terror and trembling before us. 24 By the might of your arm may these blasphemers who come against your holy people be struck down." With these words he ended his prayer.

25 Nicanor and his troops advanced with trumpets and battle songs, 26 but Judas and his troops met the enemy in battle with invocations to God and prayers. 27 So, fighting with their hands and praying to God in their hearts, they laid low at least thirty-five thousand, and were greatly gladdened by God's manifestation.

28 When the action was over and they were returning with joy, they recognized Nicanor, lying dead, in full armor. 29 Then there was shouting and tumult, and they blessed the Sovereign Lord in the language of their ancestors. 30 Then the man who was ever in body and soul the defender of his people, the man who maintained his youthful goodwill toward his compatriots, ordered them to cut off Nicanor's head and arm and carry them to Jerusalem. 31 When he arrived there and had called his compatriots together and stationed the priests before the altar, he sent for those who were in the citadel. 32 He showed them the vile Nicanor's head and that profane man's arm, which had been boastfully stretched out against the holy house of
the Almighty. 33 He cut out the tongue of the ungodly Nicanor and said that he would feed it piecemeal to the birds and would hang up these rewards of his folly opposite the sanctuary. 34 And they all, looking to heaven, blessed the Lord who had manifested himself, saying, "Blessed is he who has kept his own place undefiled!" 35 Judas hung Nicanor's head from the citadel, a clear and conspicuous sign to everyone of the help of the Lord. 36 And they all decreed by public vote never to let this day go unobserved, but to celebrate the thirteenth day of the twelfth month — which is called Adar in the Aramaic language — the day before Mordecai's day.

**Epilogue**

37 This, then, is how matters turned out with Nicanor, and from that time the city has been in the possession of the Hebrews. So I will here end my story.

38 If it is well told and to the point, that is what I myself desired; if it is poorly done and mediocre, that was the best I could do. 39 For just as it is harmful to drink wine alone, or, again, to drink water alone, while wine mixed with water is sweet and delicious and enhances one's enjoyment, so also the style of the story delights the ears of those who read the work. And here will be the end.
1 ESDRAS

Introduction

NOTE: The books from 1 Esdras through 3 Maccabees are recognized as Deuterocanonical Scripture by the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches. They are not so recognized by the Roman Catholic Church, but 1 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh (together with 2 Esdras) are placed in an appendix to the Latin Vulgate Bible.

First Esdras is one of several books bearing the name of Ezra (see Ezra-Nehemiah). Known in the Apocrypha as 1 Esdras, the book is called 3 Esdras in the Latin Vulgate Bible where (since the Council of Trent) it has been placed in an appendix after the New Testament. With one significant exception, the book repeats, with minor variations, sections from 2 Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah (see Introduction to Chronicles and Introduction to Ezra-Nehemiah). First Esdras begins with King Josiah's Passover celebration in Jerusalem in 622 BCE, reproducing the substance of 2 Chr 35.1-36.21. It continues directly with Ezra 1-10 (all of Ezra), followed with Nehemiah 8, which describes events that ostensibly transpired in 458. The only material unique to 1 Esdras is the story of the three young bodyguards in the court of King Darius (3.1-5.6). Although the book is largely copied from earlier biblical books, through its selection and organization of material, it offers a distinct perspective on the history it recounts. It traces a trajectory between two feasts (1.1-24 and 9.49-55), and thereby seems more upbeat than Ezra-Nehemiah's longer report about the difficulties of the return to the land and the restoration of worship and community.
The divisions of the books are:

- 1.1-24: An ideal state of affairs: Josiah's Passover celebration (=2 Chr 35.1-27)
- 1.25-58: Decline and destruction (=2 Chr 36.1-21)
- 2.1-9.55: Stages of return and restoration (=Ezra 1-10 and Nehemiah 8)

The book begins and concludes with a feast in Jerusalem in front of the Temple — suggesting that the Temple, significant in other postexilic writings, is a central issue of 1 Esdras. The decline between the feasts is brief, followed immediately with a gradual but effective restoration of altar, Temple, and community. Whereas Ezra-Nehemiah highlights disjunctions between the past and the return, 1 Esdras, like Chronicles, underscores continuities, sometimes by conflating events.

First Esdras also contrasts with Ezra-Nehemiah in glorifying leaders, especially the Davidic heir Zerubbabel, whose role it expands significantly. In particular, the lengthy story of the three young men in Darius's court focuses the book upon Zerubbabel's achievements. This story portrays Zerubbabel as the wise hero who wins Darius's support and initiates the construction of the Temple. Ezra the priest also rises to a higher level, being called explicitly a high priest (Chief Priest may refer to Ezra as well). Ezra's prominence is further increased by the absence of collaboration with Nehemiah in the book. This enhances his prominence in the restoration and the climax of the entire story (8.1-99.55).

This book has been preserved in Greek and reflects Hellenistic values and vocabulary. Although the latest events it narrates are from the mid-fifth century, it probably dates in its current form from the second century BCE. It is unclear whether the book is a translation of an earlier Hebrew or Aramaic version (possibly as ancient as Ezra-Nehemiah) or a late adaptation of 2 Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah composed originally in Greek. The work in Greek was used by Josephus in his Antiquities, written around 90 CE.

Since the book closely parallels Ezra-Nehemiah, see those books for more comments and parallel material.
An ideal state of affairs: Josiah's Passover celebration

1 Josiah kept the passover to his Lord in Jerusalem; he killed the passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the first month, 2 having placed the priests according to their divisions, arrayed in their vestments, in the temple of the Lord. 3 He told the Levites, the temple servants of Israel, that they should sanctify themselves to the Lord and put the holy ark of the Lord in the house that King Solomon, son of David, had built; 4 and he said, "You need no longer carry it on your shoulders. Now worship the Lord your God and serve his people Israel; prepare yourselves by your families and kindred, 5 in accordance with the directions of King David of Israel and the magnificence of his son Solomon. Stand in order in the temple according to the groupings of the ancestral houses of you Levites, who minister before your kindred the people of Israel, 6 and kill the passover lamb and prepare the sacrifices for your kindred, and keep the passover according to the commandment of the Lord that was given to Moses."

7 To the people who were present Josiah gave thirty thousand lambs and kids, and three thousand calves; these were given from the king's possessions, as he promised, to the people and the priests and Levites. 8 Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the chief officers of the temple, gave to the priests for the passover two thousand six hundred sheep and three hundred calves. 9 And Jeconiah and Shemaiah and his brother Nethanel, and Hashabiah and Ochiel and Joram, captains over thousands, gave the Levites for the passover five thousand sheep and seven hundred calves.

10 This is what took place. The priests and the Levites, having the unleavened bread, stood in proper order according to kindred 11 and the grouping of the ancestral houses, before the people, to make the offering to the Lord as it is written in the book of Moses; this they did in the morning. 12 They roasted the passover lamb with fire, as required; and they boiled the sacrifices in bronze pots and caldrons, with a pleasing odor, 13 and carried them to all the people. Afterward they prepared the passover for themselves and for their kindred the priests, the sons of Aaron, 14 because the priests were offering the fat
until nightfall; so the Levites prepared it for themselves and for their kindred the priests, the sons of Aaron. 15 The temple singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their place according to the arrangement made by David, and also Asaph, Zechariah, and Eddinus, who represented the king. 16 The gatekeepers were at each gate; no one needed to interrupt his daily duties, for their kindred the Levites prepared the passover for them.

17 So the things that had to do with the sacrifices to the Lord were accomplished that day: the passover was kept 18 and the sacrifices were offered on the altar of the Lord, according to the command of King Josiah. 19 And the people of Israel who were present at that time kept the passover and the festival of unleavened bread seven days. 20 No passover like it had been kept in Israel since the times of the prophet Samuel; 21 none of the kings of Israel had kept such a passover as was kept by Josiah and the priests and Levites and the people of Judah and all of Israel who were living in Jerusalem. 22 In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this passover was kept.

23 And the deeds of Josiah were upright in the sight of the Lord, for his heart was full of godliness. 24 In ancient times the events of his reign have been recorded — concerning those who sinned and acted wickedly toward the Lord beyond any other people or kingdom, and how they grieved the Lord deeply, so that the words of the Lord fell upon Israel.

Decline and destruction

25 After all these acts of Josiah, it happened that Pharaoh, king of Egypt, went to make war at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah went out against him. 26 And the king of Egypt sent word to him saying, "What have we to do with each other, O king of Judea? 27 I was not sent against you by the Lord God, for my war is at the Euphrates. And now the Lord is with me! The Lord is with me, urging me on! Stand aside, and do not oppose the Lord."

28 Josiah, however, did not turn back to his chariot, but tried to fight with him, and did not heed the words of the prophet Jeremiah from
the mouth of the Lord. 29 He joined battle with him in the plain of Megiddo, and the commanders came down against King Josiah. 30 The king said to his servants, "Take me away from the battle, for I am very weak." And immediately his servants took him out of the line of battle. 31 He got into his second chariot; and after he was brought back to Jerusalem he died, and was buried in the tomb of his ancestors.

32 In all Judea they mourned for Josiah. The prophet Jeremiah lamented for Josiah, and the principal men, with the women, have made lamentation for him to this day; it was ordained that this should always be done throughout the whole nation of Israel. 33 These things are written in the book of the histories of the kings of Judea; and every one of the acts of Josiah, and his splendor, and his understanding of the law of the Lord, and the things that he had done before, and these that are now told, are recorded in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

The last kings of Judah

34 The men of the nation took Jeconiah son of Josiah, who was twenty-three years old, and made him king in succession to his father Josiah. 35 He reigned three months in Judah and Jerusalem. Then the king of Egypt deposed him from reigning in Judah and Jerusalem. Then the king of Egypt deposed him from reigning in Judah and Jerusalem, 36 and fined the nation one hundred talents of silver and one talent of gold. 37 The king of Egypt made his brother Jehoiakim king of Judea and Jerusalem. 38 Jehoiakim put the nobles in prison, and seized his brother Zarius and brought him back from Egypt.

39 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he began to reign in Judea and Jerusalem; he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. 40 King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came up against him; he bound him with a chain of bronze and took him away to Babylon. 41 Nebuchadnezzar also took some holy vessels of the Lord, and carried them away, and stored them in his temple in Babylon. 42 But the things that are reported about Jehoiakim, and his uncleanness and impiety, are written in the annals of the kings.
His son Jehoiachin became king in his place; when he was made king he was eighteen years old, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. A year later Nebuchadnezzar sent and removed him to Babylon, with the holy vessels of the Lord, and made Zedekiah king of Judea and Jerusalem.

Zedekiah was twenty-one years old, and he reigned eleven years. He also did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and did not heed the words that were spoken by the prophet Jeremiah from the mouth of the Lord. Although King Nebuchadnezzar had made him swear by the name of the Lord, he broke his oath and rebelled; he stiffened his neck and hardened his heart and transgressed the laws of the Lord, the God of Israel. Even the leaders of the people and of the priests committed many acts of sacrilege and lawlessness beyond all the unclean deeds of all the nations, and polluted the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem — the temple that God had made holy.

Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians

The God of their ancestors sent his messenger to call them back, because he would have spared them and his dwelling place. But they mocked his messengers, and whenever the Lord spoke, they scoffed at his prophets, until in his anger against his people because of their ungodly acts he gave command to bring against them the kings of the Chaldeans. These killed their young men with the sword around their holy temple, and did not spare young man or young woman, old man or child, for he gave them all into their hands. They took all the holy vessels of the Lord, great and small, the treasure chests of the Lord, and the royal stores, and carried them away to Babylon. They burned the house of the Lord, broke down the walls of Jerusalem, burned their towers with fire, and utterly destroyed all its glorious things. The survivors he led away to Babylon with the sword, and they were servants to him and to his sons until the Persians began to reign, in fulfillment of the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, saying, "Until the land has enjoyed its sabbaths, it shall keep sabbath all the time of its desolation until the completion of seventy years."
[1 Esdras 2]
Stages of return and restoration

1 In the first year of Cyrus as king of the Persians, so that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished — 2 the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of the Persians, and he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing:

3 "Thus says Cyrus king of the Persians: The Lord of Israel, the Lord Most High, has made me king of the world, 4 and he has commanded me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judea. 5 If any of you, therefore, are of his people, may your Lord be with you; go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judea, and build the house of the Lord of Israel — he is the Lord who dwells in Jerusalem — 6 and let each of you, wherever you may live, be helped by the people of your place with gold and silver, 7 with gifts and with horses and cattle, besides the other things added as votive offerings for the temple of the Lord that is in Jerusalem."

8 Then arose the heads of families of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, and all whose spirit the Lord had stirred to go up to build the house in Jerusalem for the Lord; 9 their neighbors helped them with everything, with silver and gold, with horses and cattle, and with a very great number of votive offerings from many whose hearts were stirred.

10 King Cyrus also brought out the holy vessels of the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and stored in his temple of idols. 11 When King Cyrus of the Persians brought these out, he gave them to Mithridates, his treasurer, 12 and by him they were given to Sheshbazzar, the governor of Judea. 13 The number of these was: one thousand gold cups, one thousand silver cups, twenty-nine silver censers, thirty gold bowls, two thousand four hundred ten silver bowls, and one thousand other vessels. 14 All the vessels were handed over, gold and silver, five thousand four hundred sixty-nine, 15 and they were carried back by Sheshbazzar with the returning exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem.
Opposition to the rebuilding of the Temple and the walls of Jerusalem;
The opponents' letter

16 In the time of King Artaxerxes of the Persians, Bishlam, Mithridates, Tabeel, Rehum, Beltethmus, the scribe Shimshai, and the rest of their associates, living in Samaria and other places, wrote him the following letter, against those who were living in Judea and Jerusalem:

17 "To King Artaxerxes our lord, your servants the recorder Rehum and the scribe Shimshai and the other members of their council, and the judges in Coelesyria and Phoenicia: 18 Let it now be known to our lord the king that the Jews who came up from you to us have gone to Jerusalem and are building that rebellious and wicked city, repairing its market places and walls and laying the foundations for a temple. 19 Now if this city is built and the walls finished, they will not only refuse to pay tribute but will even resist kings. 20 Since the building of the temple is now going on, we think it best not to neglect such a matter, 21 but to speak to our lord the king, in order that, if it seems good to you, search may be made in the records of your ancestors. 22 You will find in the annals what has been written about them, and will learn that this city was rebellious, troubling both kings and other cities, 23 and that the Jews were rebels and kept setting up blockades in it from of old. That is why this city was laid waste. 24 Therefore we now make known to you, O lord and king, that if this city is built and its walls finished, you will no longer have access to Coelesyria and Phoenicia."

25 Then the king, in reply to the recorder Rehum, Beltethmus, the scribe Shimshai, and the others associated with them and living in Samaria and Syria and Phoenicia, wrote as follows:

26 "I have read the letter that you sent me. So I ordered search to be made, and it has been found that this city from of old has fought against kings, 27 that the people in it were given to rebellion and war, and that mighty and cruel kings ruled in Jerusalem and exacted tribute from Coelesyria and Phoenicia. 28 Therefore I have now issued orders to prevent these people from building the city and to take care that nothing more be done 29 and that such wicked proceedings go no further to the annoyance of kings."
Then, when the letter from King Artaxerxes was read, Rehum and the scribe Shimshai and their associates went quickly to Jerusalem, with cavalry and a large number of armed troops, and began to hinder the builders. And the building of the temple in Jerusalem stopped until the second year of the reign of King Darius of the Persians.

[1 Esdras 3]
Return and restoration under Darius and Zerubbabel; The three young bodyguards in the court of Darius; The contest planned

1 Now King Darius gave a great banquet for all that were under him, all that were born in his house, and all the nobles of Media and Persia, 2 and all the satraps and generals and governors that were under him in the hundred twenty-seven satrapies from India to Ethiopia. 3 They ate and drank, and when they were satisfied they went away, and King Darius went to his bedroom; he went to sleep, but woke up again.

4 Then the three young men of the bodyguard, who kept guard over the person of the king, said to one another, 5 "Let each of us state what one thing is strongest; and to the one whose statement seems wisest, King Darius will give rich gifts and great honors of victory. 6 He shall be clothed in purple, and drink from gold cups, and sleep on a gold bed, and have a chariot with gold bridles, and a turban of fine linen, and a necklace around his neck; 7 and because of his wisdom he shall sit next to Darius and shall be called Kinsman of Darius."

8 Then each wrote his own statement, and they sealed them and put them under the pillow of King Darius, 9 and said, "When the king wakes, they will give him the writing; and to the one whose statement the king and the three nobles of Persia judge to be wisest the victory shall be given according to what is written." 10 The first wrote, "Wine is strongest." 11 The second wrote, "The king is strongest." 12 The third wrote, "Women are strongest, but above all things truth is victor."

13 When the king awoke, they took the writing and gave it to him, and he read it. 14 Then he sent and summoned all the nobles of Persia and Media and the satraps and generals and governors and prefects, 15 and he took his seat in the council chamber, and the writing was read in
their presence. 16 He said, "Call the young men, and they shall explain their statements." So they were summoned, and came in. 17 They said to them, "Explain to us what you have written."

In praise of the strength of wine

Then the first, who had spoken of the strength of wine, began and said: 18 "Gentlemen, how is wine the strongest? It leads astray the minds of all who drink it. 19 It makes equal the mind of the king and the orphan, of the slave and the free, of the poor and the rich. 20 It turns every thought to feasting and mirth, and forgets all sorrow and debt. 21 It makes all hearts feel rich, forgets kings and satraps, and makes everyone talk in millions. 22 When people drink they forget to be friendly with friends and kindred, and before long they draw their swords. 23 And when they recover from the wine, they do not remember what they have done. 24 Gentlemen, is not wine the strongest, since it forces people to do these things?" When he had said this, he stopped speaking.

[1 Esdras 4]

In praise of the strength of kings

1 Then the second, who had spoken of the strength of the king, began to speak: 2 "Gentlemen, are not men strongest, who rule over land and sea and all that is in them? 3 But the king is stronger; he is their lord and master, and whatever he says to them they obey. 4 If he tells them to make war on one another, they do it; and if he sends them out against the enemy, they go, and conquer mountains, walls, and towers. 5 They kill and are killed, and do not disobey the king's command; if they win the victory, they bring everything to the king — whatever spoil they take and everything else. 6 Likewise those who do not serve in the army or make war but till the soil; whenever they sow and reap, they bring some to the king; and they compel one another to pay taxes to the king. 7 And yet he is only one man! If he tells them to kill, they kill; if he tells them to release, they release; 8 if he tells them to attack, they attack; if he tells them to lay waste, they lay waste; if he tells them to build, they build; 9 if he tells them to cut down, they cut down; if he tells them to plant, they plant. 10 All his people and his
armies obey him. Furthermore, he reclines, he eats and drinks and sleeps, 11 but they keep watch around him, and no one may go away to attend to his own affairs, nor do they disobey him. 12 Gentlemen, why is not the king the strongest, since he is to be obeyed in this fashion?" And he stopped speaking.

In praise of the strength of women

13 Then the third, who had spoken of women and truth (and this was Zerubbabel), began to speak: 14 "Gentlemen, is not the king great, and are not men many, and is not wine strong? Who is it, then, that rules them, or has the mastery over them? Is it not women? 15 Women gave birth to the king and to every people that rules over sea and land. 16 From women they came; and women brought up the very men who plant the vineyards from which comes wine. 17 Women make men's clothes; they bring men glory; men cannot exist without women. 18 If men gather gold and silver or any other beautiful thing, and then see a woman lovely in appearance and beauty, 19 they let all those things go, and gape at her, and with open mouths stare at her, and all prefer her to gold or silver or any other beautiful thing. 20 A man leaves his own father, who brought him up, and his own country, and clings to his wife. 21 With his wife he ends his days, with no thought of his father or his mother or his country. 22 Therefore you must realize that women rule over you!

"Do you not labor and toil, and bring everything and give it to women? 23 A man takes his sword, and goes out to travel and rob and steal and to sail the sea and rivers; 24 he faces lions, and he walks in darkness, and when he steals and robs and plunders, he brings it back to the woman he loves. 25 A man loves his wife more than his father or his mother. 26 Many men have lost their minds because of women, and have become slaves because of them. 27 Many have perished, or stumbled, or sinned because of women. 28 And now do you not believe me?

"Is not the king great in his power? Do not all lands fear to touch him? 29 Yet I have seen him with Apame, the king's concubine, the daughter of the illustrious Bartacus; she would sit at the king's right hand 30 and
take the crown from the king's head and put it on her own, and slap the king with her left hand. 31 At this the king would gaze at her with mouth agape. If she smiles at him, he laughs; if she loses her temper with him, he flatters her, so that she may be reconciled to him. 32 Gentlemen, why are not women strong, since they do such things?"

**In praise of the strength of truth**

33 Then the king and the nobles looked at one another; and he began to speak about truth: 34 "Gentlemen, are not women strong? The earth is vast, and heaven is high, and the sun is swift in its course, for it makes the circuit of the heavens and returns to its place in one day. 35 Is not the one who does these things great? But truth is great, and stronger than all things. 36 The whole earth calls upon truth, and heaven blesses it. All God's works quake and tremble, and with him there is nothing unrighteous. 37 Wine is unrighteous, the king is unrighteous, women are unrighteous, all human beings are unrighteous, all their works are unrighteous, and all such things. There is no truth in them and in their unrighteousness they will perish. 38 But truth endures and is strong forever, and lives and prevails forever and ever. 39 With it there is no partiality or preference, but it does what is righteous instead of anything that is unrighteous or wicked. Everyone approves its deeds, 40 and there is nothing unrighteous in its judgment. To it belongs the strength and the kingship and the power and the majesty of all the ages. Blessed be the God of truth!" 41 When he stopped speaking, all the people shouted and said, "Great is truth, and strongest of all!"

**Zerubbabel's reward**

42 Then the king said to him, "Ask what you wish, even beyond what is written, and we will give it to you, for you have been found to be the wisest. You shall sit next to me, and be called my Kinsman." 43 Then he said to the king, "Remember the vow that you made on the day when you became king, to build Jerusalem, 44 and to send back all the vessels that were taken from Jerusalem, which Cyrus set apart when he began to destroy Babylon, and vowed to send them back there. 45 You also vowed to build the temple, which the Edomites burned when
Judea was laid waste by the Chaldeans. 46 And now, O lord the king, this is what I ask and request of you, and this befits your greatness. I pray therefore that you fulfill the vow whose fulfillment you vowed to the King of heaven with your own lips."

47 Then King Darius got up and kissed him, and wrote letters for him to all the treasurers and governors and generals and satraps, that they should give safe conduct to him and to all who were going up with him to build Jerusalem. 48 And he wrote letters to all the governors in Coelesyria and Phoenicia and to those in Lebanon, to bring cedar timber from Lebanon to Jerusalem, and to help him build the city. 49 He wrote in behalf of all the Jews who were going up from his kingdom to Judea, in the interest of their freedom, that no officer or satrap or governor or treasurer should forcibly enter their doors; 50 that all the country that they would occupy should be theirs without tribute; that the Idumeans should give up the villages of the Jews that they held; 51 that twenty talents a year should be given for the building of the temple until it was completed, 52 and an additional ten talents a year for burnt offerings to be offered on the altar every day, in accordance with the commandment to make seventeen offerings; 53 and that all who came from Babylonia to build the city should have their freedom, they and their children and all the priests who came. 54 He wrote also concerning their support and the priests' vestments in which they were to minister. 55 He wrote that the support for the Levites should be provided until the day when the temple would be finished and Jerusalem built. 56 He wrote that land and wages should be provided for all who guarded the city. 57 And he sent back from Babylon all the vessels that Cyrus had set apart; everything that Cyrus had ordered to be done, he also commanded to be done and to be sent to Jerusalem.

Zerubbabel's prayer

58 When the young man went out, he lifted up his face to heaven toward Jerusalem, and praised the King of heaven, saying, 59 "From you comes the victory; from you comes wisdom, and yours is the glory. I am your servant. 60 Blessed are you, who have given me wisdom; I give you thanks, O Lord of our ancestors."
Preparations for the return

61 So he took the letters, and went to Babylon and told this to all his kindred. 62 And they praised the God of their ancestors, because he had given them release and permission 63 to go up and build Jerusalem and the temple that is called by his name; and they feasted, with music and rejoicing, for seven days.

[1 Esdras 5]

1 After this the heads of ancestral houses were chosen to go up, according to their tribes, with their wives and sons and daughters, and their male and female servants, and their livestock. 2 And Darius sent with them a thousand cavalry to take them back to Jerusalem in safety, with the music of drums and flutes; 3 all their kindred were making merry. And he made them go up with them.

4 These are the names of the men who went up, according to their ancestral houses in the tribes, over their groups: 5 the priests, the descendants of Phinehas son of Aaron; Jeshua son of Jozadak son of Seraiah and Joakim son of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, of the house of David, of the lineage of Phares, of the tribe of Judah, 6 who spoke wise words before King Darius of the Persians, in the second year of his reign, in the month of Nisan, the first month.

A list of the returning exiles

7 These are the Judeans who came up out of their sojourn in exile, whom King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had carried away to Babylon 8 and who returned to Jerusalem and the rest of Judea, each to his own town. They came with Zerubbabel and Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Resaiah, Eneneus, Mordecai, Beelsarus, Aspharasus, Reeliah, Rehum, and Baanah, their leaders.

9 The number of those of the nation and their leaders: the descendants of Parosh, two thousand one hundred seventy-two. The descendants of Shephatiah, four hundred seventy-two. 10 The descendants of Arah, seven hundred fifty-six. 11 The descendants of Pahath-moab, of the
descendants of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred twelve. 12 The descendants of Elam, one thousand two hundred fifty-four. The descendants of Zattu, nine hundred forty-five. The descendants of Chorbe, seven hundred five. The descendants of Bani, six hundred forty-eight. 13 The descendants of Bebai, six hundred twenty-three. The descendants of Azgad, one thousand three hundred twenty-two. 14 The descendants of Adonikam, six hundred sixty-seven. The descendants of Bigvai, two thousand sixty-six. The descendants of Adin, four hundred fifty-four. 15 The descendants of Ater, namely of Hezekiah, ninety-two. The descendants of Kilan and Azetas, sixty-seven. The descendants of Azaru, four hundred thirty-two. 16 The descendants of Annias, one hundred one. The descendants of Arom. The descendants of Bezai, three hundred twenty-three. The descendants of Arsiphurith, one hundred twelve. 17 The descendants of Baiterus, three thousand five. The descendants of Bethlomon, one hundred twenty-three. 18 Those from Netophah, fifty-five. Those from Anathoth, one hundred fifty-eight. Those from Bethasmoth, forty-two. 19 Those from Kiriatharim, twenty-five. Those from Chephirah and Beeroth, seven hundred forty-three. 20 The Chadiasans and Ammidians, four hundred twenty-two. Those from Kirama and Geba, six hundred twenty-one. 21 Those from Macalon, one hundred twenty-two. Those from Betolio, fifty-two. The descendants of Niphish, one hundred fifty-six. 22 The descendants of the other Calamolalus and Ono, seven hundred twenty-one. 23 The descendants of Jerechus, three hundred forty-five. 24 The priests: the descendants of Jedaiah son of Jeshua, of the descendants of Anasib, nine hundred seventy-two. The descendants of Immer, one thousand and fifty-two. 25 The descendants of Pashhur, one thousand two hundred forty-seven. The descendants of Charme, one thousand seventeen.

26 The Levites: the descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel and Bannas and Sudias, seventy-four. 27 The temple singers: the descendants of Asaph, one hundred twenty-eight. 28 The gatekeepers: the descendants of Shallum, the descendants of Ater, the descendants of Talmon, the
descendants of Akkub, the descendants of Hatita, the descendants of Shobai, in all one hundred thirty-nine.

29 The temple servants: the descendants of Esau, the descendants of Hasupha, the descendants of Tabbaoth, the descendants of Keros, the descendants of Sua, the descendants of Padon, the descendants of Lebanon, the descendants of Hagabah, 30 the descendants of Akkub, the descendants of Uthai, the descendants of Ketab, the descendants of Hagab, the descendants of Subai, the descendants of Hana, the descendants of Cathua, the descendants of Geddur, 31 the descendants of Jairus, the descendants of Daisan, the descendants of Noeba, the descendants of Chezib, the descendants of Gazera, the descendants of Uzza, the descendants of Phinoe, the descendants of Hassrah, the descendants of Basthai, the descendants of Asnah, the descendants of Maani, the descendants of Nephisim, the descendants of Acuph, the descendants of Hakupha, the descendants of Asur, the descendants of Pharakim, the descendants of Bazluth, 32 the descendants of Mehida, the descendants of Cathua, the descendants of Charea, the descendants of Barkos, the descendants of Serar, the descendants of Temah, the descendants of Neziah, the descendants of Hatipha.

33 The descendants of Solomon's servants: the descendants of Assaphioth, the descendants of Peruda, the descendants of Jaalah, the descendants of Lozon, the descendants of Isdael, the descendants of Shephatiah, 34 the descendants of Agia, the descendants of Pochereth-hazzebaim, the descendants of Sarothie, the descendants of Masiah, the descendants of Gas, the descendants of Addus, the descendants of Subas, the descendants of Apherra, the descendants of Barodis, the descendants of Shaphat, the descendants of Allon.

35 All the temple servants and the descendants of Solomon's servants were three hundred seventy-two.

36 The following are those who came up from Tel-melah and Tel-harsha, under the leadership of Cherub, Addan, and Immer, 37 though they could not prove by their ancestral houses or lineage that they belonged to Israel: the descendants of Delaiah son of Tobiah, and the descendants of Nekoda, six hundred fifty-two.
38 Of the priests the following had assumed the priesthood but were not found registered: the descendants of Habaiah, the descendants of Hakkoz, and the descendants of Jaddus who had married Agia, one of the daughters of Barzillai, and was called by his name. 39 When a search was made in the register and the genealogy of these men was not found, they were excluded from serving as priests. 40 And Nehemiah and Attharias told them not to share in the holy things until a high priest should appear wearing Urim and Thummim.

41 All those of Israel, twelve or more years of age, besides male and female servants, were forty-two thousand three hundred sixty; 42 their male and female servants were seven thousand three hundred thirty-seven; there were two hundred forty-five musicians and singers. 43 There were four hundred thirty-five camels, and seven thousand thirty-six horses, two hundred forty-five mules, and five thousand five hundred twenty-five donkeys.

44 Some of the heads of families, when they came to the temple of God that is in Jerusalem, vowed that, to the best of their ability, they would erect the house on its site, 45 and that they would give to the sacred treasury for the work a thousand minas of gold, five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priests' vestments.

46 The priests, the Levites, and some of the people settled in Jerusalem and its vicinity; and the temple singers, the gatekeepers, and all Israel in their towns.

**Work on the Temple commences and is interrupted; Building the altar and resumption of sacrifices**

47 When the seventh month came, and the Israelites were all in their own homes, they gathered with a single purpose in the square before the first gate toward the east. 48 Then Jeshua son of Jozadak, with his fellow priests, and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, with his kinsmen, took their places and prepared the altar of the God of Israel, 49 to offer burnt offerings upon it, in accordance with the directions in the book of Moses the man of God. 50 And some joined them from the other peoples of the land. And they erected the altar in its place, for all the
peoples of the land were hostile to them and were stronger than they;
and they offered sacrifices at the proper times and burnt offerings to
the Lord morning and evening. 51 They kept the festival of booths, as it
is commanded in the law, and offered the proper sacrifices every day,
52 and thereafter the regular offerings and sacrifices on sabbaths and
at new moons and at all the consecrated feasts. 53 And all who had
made any vow to God began to offer sacrifices to God, from the new
moon of the seventh month, though the temple of God was not yet
built. 54 They gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and food
and drink 55 and carts to the Sidonians and the Tyrians, to bring cedar
logs from Lebanon and convey them in rafts to the harbor of Joppa,
according to the decree that they had in writing from King Cyrus of the
Persians.

The Temple's foundation is laid

56 In the second year after their coming to the temple of God in
Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and
Jeshua son of Jozadak made a beginning, together with their kindred
and the levitical priests and all who had come back to Jerusalem from
exile; 57 and they laid the foundation of the temple of God on the new
moon of the second month in the second year after they came to Judea
and Jerusalem. 58 They appointed the Levites who were twenty or
more years of age to have charge of the work of the Lord. And Jeshua
arose, and his sons and kindred and his brother Kadmiel and the sons
of Jeshua Emadabun and the sons of Joda son of Iliadun, with their
sons and kindred, all the Levites, pressing forward the work on the
house of God with a single purpose.

So the builders built the temple of the Lord. 59 And the priests stood
arrayed in their vestments, with musical instruments and trumpets, and
the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, 60 praising the Lord and
blessing him, according to the directions of King David of Israel; 61 they
sang hymns, giving thanks to the Lord, "For his goodness and his glory
are forever upon all Israel." 62 And all the people sounded trumpets
and shouted with a great shout, praising the Lord for the erection of
the house of the Lord. 63 Some of the levitical priests and heads of
ancestral houses, old men who had seen the former house, came to the
building of this one with outcries and loud weeping, 64 while many came with trumpets and a joyful noise, 65 so that the people could not hear the trumpets because of the weeping of the people.

Enemies interrupt the work of the returned exiles

For the multitude sounded the trumpets loudly, so that the sound was heard far away; 66 and when the enemies of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin heard it, they came to find out what the sound of the trumpets meant. 67 They learned that those who had returned from exile were building the temple for the Lord God of Israel. 68 So they approached Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the heads of the ancestral houses and said to them, "We will build with you. 69 For we obey your Lord just as you do and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of King Esar-haddon of the Assyrians, who brought us here." 70 But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the heads of the ancestral houses in Israel said to them, "You have nothing to do with us in building the house for the Lord our God, 71 for we alone will build it for the Lord of Israel, as Cyrus, the king of the Persians, has commanded us." 72 But the peoples of the land pressed hard upon those in Judea, cut off their supplies, and hindered their building; 73 and by plots and demagoguery and uprisings they prevented the completion of the building as long as King Cyrus lived. They were kept from building for two years, until the reign of Darius.

[1 Esdras 6]

Temple work resumes

1 Now in the second year of the reign of Darius, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo prophesied to the Jews who were in Judea and Jerusalem; they prophesied to them in the name of the Lord God of Israel. 2 Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son of Jozadak began to build the house of the Lord that is in Jerusalem, with the help of the prophets of the Lord who were with them.

3 At the same time Sisinnes the governor of Syria and Phoenicia and Sathrabuzanes and their associates came to them and said, 4 "By whose order are you building this house and this roof and finishing all
the other things? And who are the builders that are finishing these things?" 5 Yet the elders of the Jews were dealt with kindly, for the providence of the Lord was over the captives; 6 they were not prevented from building until word could be sent to Darius concerning them and a report made.

7 A copy of the letter that Sisinnes the governor of Syria and Phoenicia, and Sathrabuzanes, and their associates the local rulers in Syria and Phoenicia, wrote and sent to Darius:

8 "To King Darius, greetings. Let it be fully known to our lord the king that, when we went to the country of Judea and entered the city of Jerusalem, we found the elders of the Jews, who had been in exile, 9 building in the city of Jerusalem a great new house for the Lord, of hewn stone, with costly timber laid in the walls. 10 These operations are going on rapidly, and the work is prospering in their hands and being completed with all splendor and care. 11 Then we asked these elders, 'At whose command are you building this house and laying the foundations of this structure?' 12 In order that we might inform you in writing who the leaders are, we questioned them and asked them for a list of the names of those who are at their head. 13 They answered us, 'We are the servants of the Lord who created the heaven and the earth. 14 The house was built many years ago by a king of Israel who was great and strong, and it was finished. 15 But when our ancestors sinned against the Lord of Israel who is in heaven, and provoked him, he gave them over into the hands of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, king of the Chaldeans; 16 and they pulled down the house, and burned it, and carried the people away captive to Babylon. 17 But in the first year that Cyrus reigned over the country of Babylonia, King Cyrus wrote that this house should be rebuilt. 18 And the holy vessels of gold and of silver, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the house in Jerusalem and stored in his own temple, these King Cyrus took out again from the temple in Babylon, and they were delivered to Zerubbabel and Sheshbazzar the governor 19 with the command that he should take all these vessels back and put them in the temple at Jerusalem, and that this temple of the Lord should be rebuilt on its site. 20 Then this Sheshbazzar, after coming here, laid the foundations of the house of the Lord that is in Jerusalem. Although it has been in
process of construction from that time until now, it has not yet reached completion.' 21 Now therefore, O king, if it seems wise to do so, let search be made in the royal archives of our lord the king that are in Babylon; 22 if it is found that the building of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem was done with the consent of King Cyrus, and if it is approved by our lord the king, let him send us directions concerning these things."

23 Then Darius commanded that search be made in the royal archives that were deposited in Babylon. And in Ecbatana, the fortress that is in the country of Media, a scroll was found in which this was recorded: 24 "In the first year of the reign of King Cyrus, he ordered the building of the house of the Lord in Jerusalem, where they sacrifice with perpetual fire; 25 its height to be sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits, with three courses of hewn stone and one course of new native timber; the cost to be paid from the treasury of King Cyrus; 26 and that the holy vessels of the house of the Lord, both of gold and of silver, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the house in Jerusalem and carried away to Babylon, should be restored to the house in Jerusalem, to be placed where they had been."

27 So Darius commanded Sisinnes the governor of Syria and Phoenicia, and Sathrabuzanes, and their associates, and those who were appointed as local rulers in Syria and Phoenicia, to keep away from the place, and to permit Zerubbabel, the servant of the Lord and governor of Judea, and the elders of the Jews to build this house of the Lord on its site. 28 "And I command that it be built completely, and that full effort be made to help those who have returned from the exile of Judea, until the house of the Lord is finished; 29 and that out of the tribute of Coele Syria and Phoenicia a portion be scrupulously given to these men, that is, to Zerubbabel the governor, for sacrifices to the Lord, for bulls and rams and lambs, 30 and likewise wheat and salt and wine and oil, regularly every year, without quibbling, for daily use as the priests in Jerusalem may indicate, 31 in order that libations may be made to the Most High God for the king and his children, and prayers be offered for their lives."
32 He commanded that if anyone should transgress or nullify any of the 
things herein written, a beam should be taken out of the house of the 
perpetrator, who then should be impaled upon it, and all property 
forfeited to the king.

33 "Therefore may the Lord, whose name is there called upon, destroy 
every king and nation that shall stretch out their hands to hinder or 
damage that house of the Lord in Jerusalem.

34 "I, King Darius, have decreed that it be done with all diligence as 
here prescribed."

[1 Esdras 7]
The Temple completed

1 Then Sisinnes the governor of Coelesyria and Phoenicia, and 
Sathrabuzanes, and their associates, following the orders of King 
Darius, supervised the holy work with very great care, assisting the 
elders of the Jews and the chief officers of the temple. 2 The holy work 
prospered, while the prophets Haggai and Zechariah prophesied; 4 and 
they completed it by the command of the Lord God of Israel. So with 
the consent of Cyrus and Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of the Persians, 5 
the holy house was finished by the twenty-third day of the month of 
Adar, in the sixth year of King Darius. 6 And the people of Israel, the 
priests, the Levites, and the rest of those who returned from exile who 
joined them, did according to what was written in the book of Moses. 
7 They offered at the dedication of the temple of the Lord one 
hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, 8 and twelve 
male goats for the sin of all Israel, according to the number of the 
twelve leaders of the tribes of Israel; 9 and the priests and the Levites 
stood arrayed in their vestments, according to kindred, for the services 
of the Lord God of Israel in accordance with the book of Moses; and 
the gatekeepers were at each gate.
The Passover celebration

10 The people of Israel who came from exile kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, after the priests and the Levites were purified together. 11 Not all of the returned captives were purified, but the Levites were all purified together, 12 and they sacrificed the passover lamb for all the returned captives and for their kindred the priests and for themselves. 13 The people of Israel who had returned from exile ate it, all those who had separated themselves from the abominations of the peoples of the land and sought the Lord. 14 They also kept the festival of unleavened bread seven days, rejoicing before the Lord, 15 because he had changed the will of the king of the Assyrians concerning them, to strengthen their hands for the service of the Lord God of Israel.

[1 Esdras 8]
Final return and restoration under Ezra; Ezra's credentials and mission

1 After these things, when Artaxerxes, the king of the Persians, was reigning, Ezra came, the son of Seraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, son of Shallum, 2 son of Zadok, son of Ahitub, son of Amariah, son of Uzzi, son of Bukki, son of Abishua, son of Phineas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the high priest. 3 This Ezra came up from Babylon as a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, which was given by the God of Israel; 4 and the king showed him honor, for he found favor before the king in all his requests. 5 There came up with him to Jerusalem some of the people of Israel and some of the priests and Levites and temple singers and gatekeepers and temple servants, 6 in the seventh year of the reign of Artaxerxes, in the fifth month (this was the king's seventh year); for they left Babylon on the new moon of the first month and arrived in Jerusalem on the new moon of the fifth month, by the prosperous journey that the Lord gave them. 7 For Ezra possessed great knowledge, so that he omitted nothing from the law of the Lord or the commandments, but taught all Israel all the ordinances and judgments.
The letter of Artaxerxes authorizing Ezra

8 The following is a copy of the written commission from King Artaxerxes that was delivered to Ezra the priest and reader of the law of the Lord:

9 "King Artaxerxes to Ezra the priest and reader of the law of the Lord, greeting. 10 In accordance with my gracious decision, I have given orders that those of the Jewish nation and of the priests and Levites and others in our realm, those who freely choose to do so, may go with you to Jerusalem. 11 Let as many as are so disposed, therefore, leave with you, just as I and the seven Friends who are my counselors have decided, 12 in order to look into matters in Judea and Jerusalem, in accordance with what is in the law of the Lord, 13 and to carry to Jerusalem the gifts for the Lord of Israel that I and my Friends have vowed, and to collect for the Lord in Jerusalem all the gold and silver that may be found in the country of Babylonia, 14 together with what is given by the nation for the temple of their Lord that is in Jerusalem, both gold and silver for bulls and rams and lambs and what goes with them, 15 so as to offer sacrifices on the altar of their Lord that is in Jerusalem. 16 Whatever you and your kindred are minded to do with the gold and silver, perform it in accordance with the will of your God; 17 deliver the holy vessels of the Lord that are given you for the use of the temple of your God that is in Jerusalem. 18 And whatever else occurs to you as necessary for the temple of your God, you may provide out of the royal treasury.

19 "I, King Artaxerxes, have commanded the treasurers of Syria and Phoenicia that whatever Ezra the priest and reader of the law of the Most High God sends for, they shall take care to give him, 20 up to a hundred talents of silver, and likewise up to a hundred cors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, and salt in abundance. 21 Let all things prescribed in the law of God be scrupulously fulfilled for the Most High God, so that wrath may not come upon the kingdom of the king and his sons. 22 You are also informed that no tribute or any other tax is to be laid on any of the priests or Levites or temple singers or gatekeepers or temple servants or persons employed in this temple, and that no one has authority to impose any tax on them.
23 "And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of God, appoint judges and justices to judge all those who know the law of your God, throughout all Syria and Phoenicia; and you shall teach it to those who do not know it. 24 All who transgress the law of your God or the law of the kingdom shall be strictly punished, whether by death or some other punishment, either fine or imprisonment."

**Ezra report: leading the exiles to Jerusalem**

25 Then Ezra the scribe said, "Blessed be the Lord alone, who put this into the heart of the king, to glorify his house that is in Jerusalem, 26 and who honored me in the sight of the king and his counselors and all his Friends and nobles. 27 I was encouraged by the help of the Lord my God, and I gathered men from Israel to go up with me."

28 These are the leaders, according to their ancestral houses and their groups, who went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of King Artaxerxes: 29 Of the descendants of Phineas, Gershom. Of the descendants of Ithamar, Gamael. Of the descendants of David, Hattush son of Shecaniah. 30 Of the descendants of Parosh, Zechariah, and with him a hundred fifty men enrolled. 31 Of the descendants of Pahath-moab, Eliehoenai son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred men. 32 Of the descendants of Zattu, Shecaniah son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred men. Of the descendants of Adin, Obed son of Jonathan, and with him two hundred fifty men. 33 Of the descendants of Elam, Jeshaiah son of Gotholiah, and with him seventy men. 34 Of the descendants of Shephatiah, Zeraiah son of Michael, and with him seventy men. 35 Of the descendants of Joab, Obadiah son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred twelve men. 36 Of the descendants of Bani, Shelomith son of Josiphiah, and with him a hundred sixty men. 37 Of the descendants of Bebai, Zechariah son of Bebai, and with him twenty-eight men. 38 Of the descendants of Azgad, Johanan son of Hakkatan, and with him a hundred ten men. 39 Of the descendants of Adonikam, the last ones, their names being Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah, and with them seventy men. 40 Of the descendants of Bigvai, Uthai son of Istalcurus, and with him seventy men.
I assembled them at the river called Theras, and we encamped there three days, and I inspected them. When I found there none of the descendants of the priests or of the Levites, I sent word to Eliezar, Iduel, Maasmas, El Nathan, Shemaiah, Jarib, Nathan, El Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, who were leaders and men of understanding; I told them to go to Iddo, who was the leading man at the place of the treasury, and ordered them to tell Iddo and his kindred and the treasurers at that place to send us men to serve as priests in the house of our Lord. And by the mighty hand of our Lord they brought us competent men of the descendants of Mahli son of Levi, son of Israel, namely Sherebiah with his descendants and kinsmen, eighteen; also Hashabiah and Annunus and his brother Jeshaiah, of the descendants of Hananiah, and their descendants, twenty men; and of the temple servants, whom David and the leaders had given for the service of the Levites, two hundred twenty temple servants; the list of all their names was reported.

There I proclaimed a fast for the young men before our Lord, to seek from him a prosperous journey for ourselves and for our children and the livestock that were with us. For I was ashamed to ask the king for foot soldiers and cavalry and an escort to keep us safe from our adversaries; for we had said to the king, "The power of our Lord will be with those who seek him, and will support them in every way." And again we prayed to our Lord about these things, and we found him very merciful.

Then I set apart twelve of the leaders of the priests, Sherebiah and Hashabiah, and ten of their kinsmen with them; and I weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the holy vessels of the house of our Lord, which the king himself and his counselors and the nobles and all Israel had given. I weighed and gave to them six hundred fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels worth a hundred talents, and a hundred talents of gold, and twenty golden bowls, and twelve bronze vessels of fine bronze that glittered like gold. And I said to them, "You are holy to the Lord, and the vessels are holy, and the silver and the gold are vowed to the Lord, the Lord of our ancestors. Be watchful and on guard until you deliver them to the leaders of the priests and the Levites, and to the heads of the ancestral houses of
Israel, in Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of our Lord." So the priests and the Levites who took the silver and the gold and the vessels that had been in Jerusalem carried them to the temple of the Lord.

Arrival in Jerusalem

61 We left the river Theras on the twelfth day of the first month; and we arrived in Jerusalem by the mighty hand of our Lord, which was upon us; he delivered us from every enemy on the way, and so we came to Jerusalem. 62 When we had been there three days, the silver and the gold were weighed and delivered in the house of our Lord to the priest Meremoth son of Uriah; 63 with him was Eleazar son of Phinehas, and with them were Jozabad son of Jeshua and Moeth son of Binnui, the Levites. 64 The whole was counted and weighed, and the weight of everything was recorded at that very time. 65 And those who had returned from exile offered sacrifices to the Lord, the God of Israel, twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, 66 seventy-two lambs, and as a thank offering twelve male goats — all as a sacrifice to the Lord. 67 They delivered the king's orders to the royal stewards and to the governors of Coelesyria and Phoenicia; and these officials honored the people and the temple of the Lord.

The crisis of mixed marriages in Judah

68 After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said, 69 "The people of Israel and the rulers and the priests and the Levites have not put away from themselves the alien peoples of the land and their pollutions, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Edomites. 70 For they and their descendants have married the daughters of these people, and the holy race has been mixed with the alien peoples of the land; and from the beginning of this matter the leaders and the nobles have been sharing in this iniquity."
Ezra's response to the crisis: mourning and prayer

71 As soon as I heard these things I tore my garments and my holy mantle, and pulled out hair from my head and beard, and sat down in anxiety and grief. 72 And all who were ever moved at the word of the Lord of Israel gathered around me, as I mourned over this iniquity, and I sat grief-stricken until the evening sacrifice. 73 Then I rose from my fast, with my garments and my holy mantle torn, and kneeling down and stretching out my hands to the Lord 74 I said,

"O Lord, I am ashamed and confused before your face. 75 For our sins have risen higher than our heads, and our mistakes have mounted up to heaven 76 from the times of our ancestors, and we are in great sin to this day. 77 Because of our sins and the sins of our ancestors, we with our kindred and our kings and our priests were given over to the kings of the earth, to the sword and exile and plundering, in shame until this day. 78 And now in some measure mercy has come to us from you, O Lord, to leave to us a root and a name in your holy place, 79 and to uncover a light for us in the house of the Lord our God, and to give us food in the time of our servitude. 80 Even in our bondage we were not forsaken by our Lord, but he brought us into favor with the kings of the Persians, so that they have given us food 81 and glorified the temple of our Lord, and raised Zion from desolation, to give us a stronghold in Judea and Jerusalem.

82 "And now, O Lord, what shall we say, when we have these things? For we have transgressed your commandments, which you gave by your servants the prophets, saying, 83 'The land that you are entering to take possession of is a land polluted with the pollution of the aliens of the land, and they have filled it with their uncleanness. 84 Therefore do not give your daughters in marriage to their descendants, and do not take their daughters for your descendants; 85 do not seek ever to have peace with them, so that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever.' 86 And all that has happened to us has come about because of our evil deeds and our great sins. For you, O Lord, lifted the burden of our sins 87 and gave us such a root as this; but we turned back again to transgress your law by mixing with the uncleanness of the peoples
of the land. 88 Were you not angry enough with us to destroy us without leaving a root or seed or name? 89 O Lord of Israel, you are faithful; for we are left as a root to this day. 90 See, we are now before you in our iniquities; for we can no longer stand in your presence because of these things."

The people repent and dismiss their foreign wives

91 While Ezra was praying and making his confession, weeping and lying on the ground before the temple, there gathered around him a very great crowd of men and women and youths from Jerusalem; for there was great weeping among the multitude. 92 Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, one of the men of Israel, called out, and said to Ezra, "We have sinned against the Lord, and have married foreign women from the peoples of the land; but even now there is hope for Israel. 93 Let us take an oath to the Lord about this, that we will put away all our foreign wives, with their children, 94 as seems good to you and to all who obey the law of the Lord. 95 Rise up and take action, for it is your task, and we are with you to take strong measures." 96 Then Ezra rose up and made the leaders of the priests and Levites of all Israel swear that they would do this. And they swore to it.

[1 Esdras 9]

1 Then Ezra set out and went from the court of the temple to the chamber of Jehohanan son of Eliashib, 2 and spent the night there; and he did not eat bread or drink water, for he was mourning over the great iniquities of the multitude. 3 And a proclamation was made throughout Judea and Jerusalem to all who had returned from exile that they should assemble at Jerusalem, 4 and that if any did not meet there within two or three days, in accordance with the decision of the ruling elders, their livestock would be seized for sacrifice and the men themselves expelled from the multitude of those who had returned from the captivity.

5 Then the men of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin assembled at Jerusalem within three days; this was the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month. 6 All the multitude sat in the open square
before the temple, shivering because of the bad weather that prevailed. 7 Then Ezra stood up and said to them, "You have broken the law and married foreign women, and so have increased the sin of Israel. 8 Now then make confession and give glory to the Lord the God of our ancestors, 9 and do his will; separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from your foreign wives."

10 Then all the multitude shouted and said with a loud voice, "We will do as you have said. 11 But the multitude is great and it is winter, and we are not able to stand in the open air. This is not a work we can do in one day or two, for we have sinned too much in these things. 12 So let the leaders of the multitude stay, and let all those in our settlements who have foreign wives come at the time appointed, 13 with the elders and judges of each place, until we are freed from the wrath of the Lord over this matter."

14 Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah undertook the matter on these terms, and Meshullam and Levi and Shabbethai served with them as judges. 15 And those who had returned from exile acted in accordance with all this.

16 Ezra the priest chose for himself the leading men of their ancestral houses, all of them by name; and on the new moon of the tenth month they began their sessions to investigate the matter. 17 And the cases of the men who had foreign wives were brought to an end by the new moon of the first month.

18 Of the priests, those who were brought in and found to have foreign wives were: 19 of the descendants of Jeshua son of Jozadak and his kindred, Maaseiah, Eliezar, Jarib, and Jodan. 20 They pledged themselves to put away their wives, and to offer rams in expiation of their error. 21 Of the descendants of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah and Maaseiah and Shemaiah and Jehiel and Azariah. 22 Of the descendants of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, and Nathanael, and Gedaliah, and Salthas.
23 And of the Levites: Jozabad and Shimei and Kelaiah, who was Kelita, and Pethahiah and Judah and Jonah. 24 Of the temple singers: Eliashib and Zaccur. 25 Of the gatekeepers: Shallum and Telem.

26 Of Israel: of the descendants of Parosh: Ramiah, Izziah, Malchijah, Mijamin, and Eleazar, and Asibias, and Benaiyah. 27 Of the descendants of Elam: Mattaniah and Zechariah, Jezrielus and Abdi, and Jeremoth and Elijah. 28 Of the descendants of Zamoth: Elidas, Eliashib, Othoniah, Jeremoth, and Zabad and Zerdaiah. 29 Of the descendants of Bebai: Jehohanann and Hananiah and Zabbai and Emathis. 30 Of the descendants of Mani: Olamus, Mamuchus, Adiaah, Jashub, and Sheal and Jeremoth. 31 Of the descendants of Addi: Naathus and Moossias, Laccunus and Naidu, and Bescaspasmys and Sesthel, and Belnusus and Manasseas. 32 Of the descendants of Annan, Elionas and Asaias and Melchias and Sabbaias and Simon Chosamaeus. 33 Of the descendants of Hashum: Mattenai and Mattattah and Zabad and Eliphelet and Manasseh and Shimei. 34 Of the descendants of Bani: Jeremai, Momdias, Maerus, Joel, Mamdaai and Bedeiah and Vaniah, Carabasion and Eliashib and Mamitanemus, Elias, Binnui, Eliasis, Shime, Shelemieh, Nethaniah. Of the descendants of Ezora: Shashai, Azarel, Azael, Samatus, Zambris, Joseph. 35 Of the descendants of Nooma: Mazitias, Zabad, Iddo, Joel, Benaiyah. 36 All these had married foreign women, and they put them away together with their children.

The restoration is complete: Ezra public reading of the law

37 The priests and the Levites and the Israelites settled in Jerusalem and in the country. On the new moon of the seventh month, when the people of Israel were in their settlements, 38 the whole multitude gathered with one accord in the open square before the east gate of the temple; 39 they told Ezra the chief priest and reader to bring the law of Moses that had been given by the Lord God of Israel. 40 So Ezra the chief priest brought the law, for all the multitude, men and women, and all the priests to hear the law, on the new moon of the seventh month. 41 He read aloud in the open square before the gate of the temple from early morning until midday, in the presence of both men and women; and all the multitude gave attention to the law. 42 Ezra the priest and reader of the law stood on the wooden platform
that had been prepared; 43 and beside him stood Mattathiah, Shema, Ananias, Azariah, Uriah, Hezekiah, and Baalsamus on his right, 44 and on his left Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Lothasubus, Nabariah, and Zechariah. 45 Then Ezra took up the book of the law in the sight of the multitude, for he had the place of honor in the presence of all. 46 When he opened the law, they all stood erect. And Ezra blessed the Lord God Most High, the God of hosts, the Almighty, 47 and the multitude answered, "Amen." They lifted up their hands, and fell to the ground and worshiped the Lord. 48 Jeshua and Anniuth and Sherebiah, Jadinus, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maiannas and Kelita, Azariah and Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, taught the law of the Lord, at the same time explaining what was read.

The concluding celebration

49 Then Attharates said to Ezra the chief priest and reader, and to the Levites who were teaching the multitude, and to all, 50 "This day is holy to the Lord" — now they were all weeping as they heard the law — 51 "so go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to those who have none; 52 for the day is holy to the Lord; and do not be sorrowful, for the Lord will exalt you." 53 The Levites commanded all the people, saying, "This day is holy; do not be sorrowful." 54 Then they all went their way, to eat and drink and enjoy themselves, and to give portions to those who had none, and to make great rejoicing; 55 because they were inspired by the words which they had been taught. And they came together.
PRAYER OF MANASSEH

Introduction

The Prayer of Manasseh is a pseudepigraphical prayer characteristic of Second Temple Judaism. An anthological composition (i.e., mosaic of biblical phrases and allusions), it is formally an individual lament for personal sin, with a petition for forgiveness. Similar to the "Penitential Psalms" in the Psalter, especially Ps 51, it differs from them in that an acknowledgment of divine justice and a confession of sin replace the complaint about God's inaction. Its closest biblical parallels are a number of late penitential prayers: Ezra 9.1-15; Neh 1.4-11; 9.6-37; Dan 9.4-19; Ps 106; Bar 1.15-3.8 (and cf. 1 Kings 8.48-52).

It is found in the Didascalia Apostolorum, a third-century CE Syriac translation of an original Greek work, and in the Apostolic Constitutions (fourth century, Greek). In the Codex Alexandrius, it is one of the fourteen canticles appended to the Psalter. A composition of a Palestinian Jew, its original language may have been either Greek or Semitic (Hebrew or Aramaic). It is probably a work of the second or first century BCE. For the Easter Orthodox churches, it is a deuterocanonical work.

Its title recalls the story of King Manasseh in 2 Chr 33; because of his idolatry (vv. 2-5), the Lord brought the Assyrians against Judah, and Manasseh was taken off, a captive in chains, to Babylon (10-11). In vv. 12-13 (and in 18-19) the Chronicler states that Manasseh prayed in his distress. The Prayer of Manasseh was composed with 2 Chr 33 in mind (cf. Pr Man 10 and 2 Chr 33.10; Pr Man 9b-10 and 2 Chr 33.11; Pr Man 1, 11 and 2 Chr 33.12) to fill a gap in 2 Chr, which lacks Manasseh's prayer. The major themes of the Prayer are the mercy that God extends even to the worst of sinners (see the sins of Manasseh in 2 Kings 21.2-17; 2 Chr 33.2-9, 19) and the effectiveness of sincere contrition and repentance. It is a tripartite poem, consisting of an acknowledgment of
God's infinite power, shown in his role as creator (vv. 1-4); a confession of sin, including divine mercy to repentant sinners (vv. 5-8) and a prayer for forgiveness (vv. 9-13); and a final petition for salvation and concluding doxology (vv. 14-15).

Prayer of Manasseh

Invocation and praise of the creator

1 O Lord Almighty,
   God of our ancestors,
   of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob
   and of their righteous offspring;

2 you who made heaven and earth
   with all their order;

3 who shackled the sea by your word of command,
   who confined the deep
   and sealed it with your terrible and glorious name;

4 at whom all things shudder,
   and tremble before your power,

5 for your glorious splendor cannot be borne,
   and the wrath of your threat to sinners is unendurable;

6 yet immeasurable and unsearchable
   is your promised mercy,
7 for you are the Lord Most High,
of great compassion, long-suffering, and very merciful,
and you relent at human suffering.
O Lord, according to your great goodness
you have promised repentance and forgiveness
to those who have sinned against you,
and in the multitude of your mercies
you have appointed repentance for sinners,
so that they may be saved.

8 Therefore you, O Lord, God of the righteous,
have not appointed repentance for the righteous,
for Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who did not sin against you,
but you have appointed repentance for me, who am a sinner.

Confession of Sins

9 For the sins I have committed are more in number than the sand of
the sea;
my transgressions are multiplied, O Lord, they are multiplied!
I am not worthy to look up and see the height of heaven
because of the multitude of my iniquities.

10 I am weighted down with many an iron fetter,
so that I am rejected because of my sins,
and I have no relief;
for I have provoked your wrath
and have done what is evil in your sight,
setting up abominations and multiplying offenses.
Supplication for Pardon

11 And now I bend the knee of my heart, imploring you for your kindness.

12 I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge my transgressions.

13 I earnestly implore you, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me! Do not destroy me with my transgressions! Do not be angry with me forever or store up evil for me; do not condemn me to the depths of the earth. For you, O Lord, are the God of those who repent,

14 and in me you will manifest your goodness; for, unworthy as I am, you will save me according to your great mercy,

15 and I will praise you continually all the days of my life. For all the host of heaven sings your praise, and yours is the glory forever. Amen.
Psalm 151

Introduction

To the traditional Hebrew Psalter, the Septuagint (LXX) adds Ps 151, with a superscript describing it as "outside the number" (i.e., of the 150 Psalms); this is the basis of the NRSV translation. It is found in the fourth-century CE Greek Codex Sinaiticus with a different superscription and in the sixth-century Codex Alexandrius (with a superscription, "The 151 Psalms of David"). In Syriac, Ps 151 is the first of a series of psalms (Ps 151-155) about the heroic exploits of David in 1 Sam 16-17.

A Hebrew version of psalm is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls (11 QPs). This Hebrew version is made up of two distinct psalms: Ps 151A (=LXX Ps 151) is a poem based on 1 Sam 16.1-13, about David the shepherd becoming Israel's king, with a superscription; this psalm is truncated in the Greek and Syriac versions. Ps 151B is the fragmentary beginning of another psalm, also with a superscription, that must have followed Ps 151A in the original scroll; it apparently deals with David's contest with Goliath (1 Sam 17), a story that is also the subject of LXX Ps 151.6-7.

In form, Ps 151A is not a hymn or a petition, but a narrative (cf. Ps 78), an autobiographical poem in which David, the youngest of his brothers, speaks of his shepherding care for his father's flocks, of his psalms praising God, and of his anointment as Israel's king. The superscription of the Hebrew poem ("A Hallelujah of David the son of Jesse") is similar to the superscriptions of Ps 145 ("Praise. Of David") and the introductory "Hallelujah" of Ps 111-113, 146-150, and thus serves to integrate this psalm into the end of Psalms.
Psalm 151

This psalm is ascribed to David as his own composition (though it is outside the number), after he had fought in single combat with Goliath.

1 I was small among my brothers,  
   and the youngest in my father's house;  
   I tended my father's sheep.

2 My hands made a harp;  
   my fingers fashioned a lyre.

3 And who will tell my Lord?  
   The Lord himself; it is he who hears.

4 It was he who sent his messenger  
   and took me from my father's sheep,  
   and anointed me with his anointing oil.

5 My brothers were handsome and tall,  
   but the Lord was not pleased with them.

6 I went out to meet the Philistine,  
   and he cursed me by his idols.

7 But I drew his own sword;  
   I beheaded him, and took away disgrace from the people of Israel.
Introduction

The book known as 3 Maccabees is a misnomer, for it is not a historical account of the Maccabees, but a fictional story about Egyptian Jews under Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-204 BCE), half a century before the Maccabean period. The book is preserved in the Greek Septuagint and the Syriac Peshitta, as well as in most manuscripts of the Armenian Bible. It is not, however, included in the Latin Vulgate. This may explain why it was not included in the canon of the Roman Catholic Church or in the traditional Protestant apocrypha. It is included in the canon of the Eastern Orthodox churches.

Third Maccabees begins with a brief account of how Ptolemy was saved from assassination at the battle of Raphia by the intervention of a Jew (1.1-5). This brief story of Jewish loyalty provides a foil against which the king's hostility to the Jews must be seen. The second episode (1.6-2.24) tells of the king's unsuccessful attempt to enter the holy of holies in the Jerusalem Temple. The desecration is averted by divine intervention in response to the prayer of the high priest Simon. The third episode, which takes up most of the book, describes the persecution of the Jews in Egypt. Upon his return there, the king determines to take vengeance upon the Jews for his humiliation in Jerusalem. He radically alters their legal status and attempts to force them to worship the Greek god Dionysus, promising to those who comply full citizenship in Alexandria (2.25-33). The vast majority of Jews resists, and with great cruelty they are herded together to be registered, tortured, and put to death. Again divine intervention averts disaster, as after forty days the writing materials have been exhausted and the registration cannot be completed (3.1-4.21). Finally the king decrees that drugged elephants be turned upon the Jews, who have been detained in the city's arena. Twice this is providentially delayed, and the third miracle occurs in answer to the prayer of the aged priest.
Eleazar, paralleling the prayer of the high priest in the second episode. The elephants turn on the king's forces, and he repents, allowing the Jews to return to their homes (5.1-6.21). The book ends with a royal letter decreeing protection for the Jews, who punish those who had apostatized and rejoice at their providential deliverance (ch 7).

Third Maccabees belongs to a narrative genre that was especially popular among Jews who lived in the Diaspora, outside the land of Israel. Other examples are found in Esther and in Daniel 2-6. These stories tell of some great danger that threatens the Jewish community, which is then averted, either through heroic action (Esther) or, more typically, through divine intervention. Such stories provided both entertainment and edification, allowing the Jewish readers to indulge their fears of destruction and then allaying those fears by the happy ending.

The work was originally written in Greek by an unknown Alexandrian Jew. The change in the status of the Jews, and the promise of Alexandrian citizenship to those who abandoned their religion, reflect the situation of the Alexandrian Jews after Rome conquered Egypt in 30 BCE. Non-Jews were subjected to a new tax, called the "laographia" (the word used in connection with the change of status in 3 Macc 2.28). Citizenship normally required the worship of other gods, and so was unacceptable to most Jews. The book was most probably composed in the early first century CE, although it does depict some earlier historical events, such as the battle of Raphia, known from other sources.

Although the book is written in a rather bombastic style, it provides a colorful drama of danger and deliverance. It also conveys a strict message of the need for solidarity in the Jewish community and the contemptible nature of apostasy.
The battle of Raphia

1 When Philopator learned from those who returned that the regions that he had controlled had been seized by Antiochus, he gave orders to all his forces, both infantry and cavalry, took with him his sister Arsinoë, and marched out to the region near Raphia, where the army of Antiochus was encamped. 2 But a certain Theodotus, determined to carry out the plot he had devised, took with him the best of the Ptolemaic arms that had been previously issued to him, and crossed over by night to the tent of Ptolemy, intending single-handed to kill him and thereby end the war. 3 But Dositheus, known as the son of Drimylus, a Jew by birth who later changed his religion and apostatized from the ancestral traditions, had led the king away and arranged that a certain insignificant man should sleep in the tent; and so it turned out that this man incurred the vengeance meant for the king. 4 When a bitter fight resulted, and matters were turning out rather in favor of Antiochus, Arsinoë went to the troops with wailing and tears, her locks all disheveled, and exhorted them to defend themselves and their children and wives bravely, promising to give them each two minas of gold if they won the battle. 5 And so it came about that the enemy was routed in the action, and many captives also were taken. 6 Now that he had foiled the plot, Ptolemy decided to visit the neighboring cities and encourage them. 7 By doing this, and by endowing their sacred enclosures with gifts, he strengthened the morale of his subjects.

Ptolemy attempts to enter the sanctuary at Jerusalem

8 Since the Jews had sent some of their council and elders to greet him, to bring him gifts of welcome, and to congratulate him on what had happened, he was all the more eager to visit them as soon as possible. 9 After he had arrived in Jerusalem, he offered sacrifice to the supreme God and made thank offerings and did what was fitting for the holy place. Then, upon entering the place and being impressed by its excellence and its beauty, 10 he marveled at the good order of the temple, and conceived a desire to enter the sanctuary. 11 When they said that this was not permitted, because not even members of their
own nation were allowed to enter, not even all of the priests, but only the high priest who was pre-eminent over all — and he only once a year — the king was by no means persuaded. 12 Even after the law had been read to him, he did not cease to maintain that he ought to enter, saying, "Even if those men are deprived of this honor, I ought not to be." 13 And he inquired why, when he entered every other temple, no one there had stopped him. 14 And someone answered thoughtlessly that it was wrong to take that as a portent. 15 "But since this has happened," the king said, "why should not I at least enter, whether they wish it or not?"

**Jewish reaction to Ptolemy's determination to enter the sanctuary**

16 Then the priests in all their vestments prostrated themselves and entreated the supreme God to aid in the present situation and to avert the violence of this evil design, and they filled the temple with cries and tears; 17 those who remained behind in the city were agitated and hurried out, supposing that something mysterious was occurring. 18 Young women who had been secluded in their chambers rushed out with their mothers, sprinkled their hair with dust, and filled the streets with groans and lamentations. 19 Those women who had recently been arrayed for marriage abandoned the bridal chambers prepared for wedded union, and, neglecting proper modesty, in a disorderly rush flocked together in the city. 20 Mothers and nurses abandoned even newborn children here and there, some in houses and some in the streets, and without a backward look they crowded together at the most high temple. 21 Various were the supplications of those gathered there because of what the king was profanely plotting. 22 In addition, the bolder of the citizens would not tolerate the completion of his plans or the fulfillment of his intended purpose. 23 They shouted to their compatriots to take arms and die courageously for the ancestral law, and created a considerable disturbance in the holy place; and being barely restrained by the old men and the elders, they resorted to the same posture of supplication as the others. 24 Meanwhile the crowd, as before, was engaged in prayer, 25 while the elders near the king tried in various ways to change his arrogant mind from the plan that he had conceived. 26 But he, in his arrogance, took heed of nothing, and began now to approach, determined to bring the
aforesaid plan to a conclusion. 27 When those who were around him observed this, they turned, together with our people, to call upon him who has all power to defend them in the present trouble and not to overlook this unlawful and haughty deed. 28 The continuous, vehement, and concerted cry of the crowds resulted in an immense uproar; 29 for it seemed that not only the people but also the walls and the whole earth around echoed, because indeed all at that time preferred death to the profanation of the place.

[3 Maccabees 2]
The prayer of Simon, the high priest

1 Then the high priest Simon, facing the sanctuary, bending his knees and extending his hands with calm dignity, prayed as follows: 2 "Lord, Lord, king of the heavens, and sovereign of all creation, holy among the holy ones, the only ruler, almighty, give attention to us who are suffering grievously from an impious and profane man, puffed up in his audacity and power. 3 For you, the creator of all things and the governor of all, are a just Ruler, and you judge those who have done anything in insolence and arrogance. 4 You destroyed those who in the past committed injustice, among whom were even giants who trusted in their strength and boldness, whom you destroyed by bringing on them a boundless flood. 5 You consumed with fire and sulfur the people of Sodom who acted arrogantly, who were notorious for their vices; and you made them an example to those who should come afterward. 6 You made known your mighty power by inflicting many and varied punishments on the audacious Pharaoh who had enslaved your holy people Israel. 7 And when he pursued them with chariots and a mass of troops, you overwhelmed him in the depths of the sea, but carried through safely those who had put their confidence in you, the Ruler over the whole creation. 8 And when they had seen works of your hands, they praised you, the Almighty. 9 You, O King, when you had created the boundless and immeasurable earth, chose this city and sanctified this place for your name, though you have no need of anything; and when you had glorified it by your magnificent manifestation, you made it a firm foundation for the glory of your great and honored name. 10 And because you love the house of Israel, you promised that if we should have reverses and tribulation should
overtake us, you would listen to our petition when we come to this place and pray. 11 And indeed you are faithful and true. 12 And because oftentimes when our fathers were oppressed you helped them in their humiliation, and rescued them from great evils, 13 see now, O holy King, that because of our many and great sins we are crushed with suffering, subjected to our enemies, and overtaken by helplessness. 14 In our downfall this audacious and profane man undertakes to violate the holy place on earth dedicated to your glorious name. 15 For your dwelling is the heaven of heavens, unapproachable by human beings. 16 But because you graciously bestowed your glory on your people Israel, you sanctified this place. 17 Do not punish us for the defilement committed by these men, or call us to account for this profanation, otherwise the transgressors will boast in their wrath and exult in the arrogance of their tongue, saying, 18 'We have trampled down the house of the sanctuary as the houses of the abominations are trampled down.' 19 Wipe away our sins and disperse our errors, and reveal your mercy at this hour. 20 Speedily let your mercies overtake us, and put praises in the mouth of those who are downcast and broken in spirit, and give us peace."

The punishment of Ptolemy

21 Thereupon God, who oversees all things, the first Father of all, holy among the holy ones, having heard the lawful supplication, scourged him who had exalted himself in insolence and audacity. 22 He shook him on this side and that as a reed is shaken by the wind, so that he lay helpless on the ground and, besides being paralyzed in his limbs, was unable even to speak, since he was smitten by a righteous judgment. 23 Then both friends and bodyguards, seeing the severe punishment that had overtaken him, and fearing that he would lose his life, quickly dragged him out, panic-stricken in their exceedingly great fear. 24 After a while he recovered, and though he had been punished, he by no means repented, but went away uttering bitter threats.

Hostile Measures against the Jews of Alexandria

25 When he arrived in Egypt, he increased in his deeds of malice, abetted by the previously mentioned drinking companions and
comrades, who were strangers to everything just. 26 He was not content with his uncounted licentious deeds, but even continued with such audacity that he framed evil reports in the various localities; and many of his friends, intently observing the king's purpose, themselves also followed his will. 27 He proposed to inflict public disgrace on the Jewish community, and he set up a stone on the tower in the courtyard with this inscription: 28 "None of those who do not sacrifice shall enter their sanctuaries, and all Jews shall be subjected to a registration involving poll tax and to the status of slaves. Those who object to this are to be taken by force and put to death; 29 those who are registered are also to be branded on their bodies by fire with the ivy-leaf symbol of Dionysus, and they shall also be reduced to their former limited status." 30 In order that he might not appear to be an enemy of all, he inscribed below: "But if any of them prefer to join those who have been initiated into the mysteries, they shall have equal citizenship with the Alexandrians."

31 Now some, however, with an obvious abhorrence of the price to be exacted for maintaining the religion of their city, readily gave themselves up, since they expected to enhance their reputation by their future association with the king. 32 But the majority acted firmly with a courageous spirit and did not abandon their religion; and by paying money in exchange for life they confidently attempted to save themselves from the registration. 33 They remained resolutely hopeful of obtaining help, and they abhorred those who separated themselves from them, considering them to be enemies of the Jewish nation, and depriving them of companionship and mutual help.

[3 Maccabees 3]
The Jews and their neighbors

1 When the impious king comprehended this situation, he became so infuriated that not only was he enraged against those Jews who lived in Alexandria, but was still more bitterly hostile toward those in the countryside; and he ordered that all should promptly be gathered into one place, and put to death by the most cruel means. 2 While these matters were being arranged, a hostile rumor was circulated against the Jewish nation by some who conspired to do them ill, a pretext
being given by a report that they hindered others from the observance of their customs. 3 The Jews, however, continued to maintain goodwill and unswerving loyalty toward the dynasty; 4 but because they worshiped God and conducted themselves by his law, they kept their separateness with respect to foods. For this reason they appeared hateful to some; 5 but since they adorned their style of life with the good deeds of upright people, they were established in good repute with everyone. 6 Nevertheless those of other races paid no heed to their good service to their nation, which was common talk among all; 7 instead they gossiped about the differences in worship and foods, alleging that these people were loyal neither to the king nor to his authorities, but were hostile and greatly opposed to his government. So they attached no ordinary reproach to them.

8 The Greeks in the city, though wronged in no way, when they saw an unexpected tumult around these people and the crowds that suddenly were forming, were not strong enough to help them, for they lived under tyranny. They did try to console them, being grieved at the situation, and expected that matters would change; 9 for such a great community ought not be left to its fate when it had committed no offense. 10 And already some of their neighbors and friends and business associates had taken some of them aside privately and were pledging to protect them and to exert more earnest efforts for their assistance.

**Ptolemy orders the arrest of all Jews in his kingdom**

11 Then the king, boastful of his present good fortune, and not considering the might of the supreme God, but assuming that he would persevere constantly in his same purpose, wrote this letter against them:

12 "King Ptolemy Philopator to his generals and soldiers in Egypt and all its districts, greetings and good health:

13 "I myself and our government are faring well. 14 When our expedition took place in Asia, as you yourselves know, it was brought to conclusion, according to plan, by the gods' deliberate alliance with
us in battle, 15 and we considered that we should not rule the nations inhabiting Coelesyria and Phoenicia by the power of the spear, but should cherish them with clemency and great benevolence, gladly treating them well. 16 And when we had granted very great revenues to the temples in the cities, we came on to Jerusalem also, and went up to honor the temple of those wicked people, who never cease from their folly. 17 They accepted our presence by word, but insincerely by deed, because when we proposed to enter their inner temple and honor it with magnificent and most beautiful offerings, 18 they were carried away by their traditional arrogance, and excluded us from entering; but they were spared the exercise of our power because of the benevolence that we have toward all. 19 By maintaining their manifest ill-will toward us, they become the only people among all nations who hold their heads high in defiance of kings and their own benefactors, and are unwilling to regard any action as sincere.

20 "But we, when we arrived in Egypt victorious, accommodated ourselves to their folly and did as was proper, since we treat all nations with benevolence. 21 Among other things, we made known to all our amnesty toward their compatriots here, both because of their alliance with us and the myriad affairs liberally entrusted to them from the beginning; and we ventured to make a change, by deciding both to deem them worthy of Alexandrian citizenship and to make them participants in our regular religious rites. 22 But in their innate malice they took this in a contrary spirit, and disdained what is good. Since they incline constantly to evil, 23 they not only spurn the priceless citizenship, but also both by speech and by silence they abominate those few among them who are sincerely disposed toward us; in every situation, in accordance with their infamous way of life, they secretly suspect that we may soon alter our policy. 24 Therefore, fully convinced by these indications that they are ill-disposed toward us in every way, we have taken precautions so that, if a sudden disorder later arises against us, we shall not have these impious people behind our backs as traitors and barbarous enemies. 25 Therefore we have given orders that, as soon as this letter arrives, you are to send to us those who live among you, together with their wives and children, with insulting and harsh treatment, and bound securely with iron fetters, to suffer the sure and shameful death that befits enemies. 26 For when all of these
have been punished, we are sure that for the remaining time the government will be established for ourselves in good order and in the best state. 27 But those who shelter any of the Jews, whether old people or children or even infants, will be tortured to death with the most hateful torments, together with their families. 28 Any who are willing to give information will receive the property of those who incur the punishment, and also two thousand drachmas from the royal treasury, and will be awarded their freedom. 29 Every place detected sheltering a Jew is to be made unapproachable and burned with fire, and shall become useless for all time to any mortal creature." 30 The letter was written in the above form.

[3 Maccabees 4]
The Jews brought to Alexandria and imprisoned

1 In every place, then, where this decree arrived, a feast at public expense was arranged for the Gentiles with shouts and gladness, for the inveterate enmity that had long ago been in their minds was now made evident and outspoken. 2 But among the Jews there was incessant mourning, lamentation, and tearful cries; everywhere their hearts were burning, and they groaned because of the unexpected destruction that had suddenly been decreed for them. 3 What district or city, or what habitable place at all, or what streets were not filled with mourning and wailing for them? 4 For with such a harsh and ruthless spirit were they being sent off, all together, by the generals in the several cities, that at the sight of their unusual punishments, even some of their enemies, perceiving the common object of pity before their eyes, reflected on the uncertainty of life and shed tears at the most miserable expulsion of these people. 5 For a multitude of gray-headed old men, sluggish and bent with age, was being led away, forced to march at a swift pace by the violence with which they were driven in such a shameful manner. 6 And young women who had just entered the bridal chamber to share married life exchanged joy for wailing, their myrrh-perfumed hair sprinkled with ashes, and were carried away unveiled, all together raising a lament instead of a wedding song, as they were torn by the harsh treatment of the heathen. 7 In bonds and in public view they were violently dragged along as far as the place of embarkation. 8 Their husbands, in the
prime of youth, their necks encircled with ropes instead of garlands, spent the remaining days of their marriage festival in lamentations instead of good cheer and youthful revelry, seeing death immediately before them. 9 They were brought on board like wild animals, driven under the constraint of iron bonds; some were fastened by the neck to the benches of the boats, others had their feet secured by unbreakable fetters, 10 and in addition they were confined under a solid deck, so that, with their eyes in total darkness, they would undergo treatment befitting traitors during the whole voyage.

11 When these people had been brought to the place called Schedia, and the voyage was concluded as the king had decreed, he commanded that they should be enclosed in the hippodrome that had been built with a monstrous perimeter wall in front of the city, and that was well suited to make them an obvious spectacle to all coming back into the city and to those from the city going out into the country, so that they could neither communicate with the king's forces nor in any way claim to be inside the circuit of the city. 12 And when this had happened, the king, hearing that the Jews' compatriots from the city frequently went out in secret to lament bitterly the ignoble misfortune of their kindred, 13 ordered in his rage that these people be dealt with in precisely the same fashion as the others, not omitting any detail of their punishment. 14 The entire race was to be registered individually, not for the hard labor that has been briefly mentioned before, but to be tortured with the outrages that he had ordered, and at the end to be destroyed in the space of a single day. 15 The registration of these people was therefore conducted with bitter haste and zealous intensity from the rising of the sun until its setting, coming to an end after forty days but still uncompleted.

16 The king was greatly and continually filled with joy, organizing feasts in honor of all his idols, with a mind alienated from truth and with a profane mouth, praising speechless things that are not able even to communicate or to come to one's help, and uttering improper words against the supreme God. 17 But after the previously mentioned interval of time the scribes declared to the king that they were no longer able to take the census of the Jews because of their immense number, 18 though most of them were still in the country, some still
residing in their homes, and some at the place; the task was impossible for all the generals in Egypt. 19 After he had threatened them severely, charging that they had been bribed to contrive a means of escape, he was clearly convinced about the matter 20 when they said and proved that both the paper and the pens they used for writing had already given out. 21 But this was an act of the invincible providence of him who was aiding the Jews from heaven.

[3 Maccabees 5]
Ptolemy orders the execution of the Jews, but is thwarted

1 Then the king, completely inflexible, was filled with overpowering anger and wrath; so he summoned Hermon, keeper of the elephants, 2 and ordered him on the following day to drug all the elephants — five hundred in number — with large handfuls of frankincense and plenty of unmixed wine, and to drive them in, maddened by the lavish abundance of drink, so that the Jews might meet their doom. 3 When he had given these orders he returned to his feasting, together with those of his Friends and of the army who were especially hostile toward the Jews. 4 And Hermon, keeper of the elephants, proceeded faithfully to carry out the orders. 5 The servants in charge of the Jews went out in the evening and bound the hands of the wretched people and arranged for their continued custody through the night, convinced that the whole nation would experience its final destruction. 6 For to the Gentiles it appeared that the Jews were left without any aid, 7 because in their bonds they were forcibly confined on every side. But with tears and a voice hard to silence they all called upon the Almighty Lord and Ruler of all power, their merciful God and Father, praying 8 that he avert with vengeance the evil plot against them and in a glorious manifestation rescue them from the fate now prepared for them. 9 So their entreaty ascended fervently to heaven.

10 Hermon, however, when he had drugged the pitiless elephants until they had been filled with a great abundance of wine and satiated with frankincense, presented himself at the courtyard early in the morning to report to the king about these preparations. 11 But the Lord sent upon the king a portion of sleep, that beneficence that from the beginning, night and day, is bestowed by him who grants it to
whomever he wishes. 12 And by the action of the Lord he was overcome by so pleasant and deep a sleep that he quite failed in his lawless purpose and was completely frustrated in his inflexible plan. 13 Then the Jews, since they had escaped the appointed hour, praised their holy God and again implored him who is easily reconciled to show the might of his all-powerful hand to the arrogant Gentiles.

14 But now, since it was nearly the middle of the tenth hour, the person who was in charge of the invitations, seeing that the guests were assembled, approached the king and nudged him. 15 And when he had with difficulty roused him, he pointed out that the hour of the banquet was already slipping by, and he gave him an account of the situation. 16 The king, after considering this, returned to his drinking, and ordered those present for the banquet to recline opposite him. 17 When this was done he urged them to give themselves over to revelry and to make the present portion of the banquet joyful by celebrating all the more. 18 After the party had been going on for some time, the king summoned Hermon and with sharp threats demanded to know why the Jews had been allowed to remain alive through the present day. 19 But when he, with the corroboration of the king's Friends, pointed out that while it was still night he had carried out completely the order given him, 20 the king, possessed by a savagery worse than that of Phalaris, said that the Jews were benefited by today's sleep, "but," he added, "tomorrow without delay prepare the elephants in the same way for the destruction of the lawless Jews!" 21 When the king had spoken, all those present readily and joyfully with one accord gave their approval, and all went to their own homes. 22 But they did not so much employ the duration of the night in sleep as in devising all sorts of insults for those they thought to be doomed.

23 Then, as soon as the cock had crowed in the early morning, Hermon, having equipped the animals, began to move them along in the great colonnade. 24 The crowds of the city had been assembled for this most pitiful spectacle and they were eagerly waiting for daybreak. 25 But the Jews, at their last gasp — since the time had run out — stretched their hands toward heaven and with most tearful supplication and mournful dirges implored the supreme God to help them again at once. 26 The rays of the sun were not yet shed abroad, and while the
The king was receiving his Friends, Hermon arrived and invited him to come out, indicating that what the king desired was ready for action. But he, on receiving the report and being struck by the unusual invitation to come out — since he had been completely overcome by incomprehension — inquired what the matter was for which this had been so zealously completed for him. This was the act of God who rules over all things, for he had implanted in the king's mind a forgetfulness of the things he had previously devised. Then Hermon and all the king's Friends pointed out that the animals and the armed forces were ready. "O king, according to your eager purpose." But at these words he was filled with an overpowering wrath, because by the providence of God his whole mind had been deranged concerning these matters; and with a threatening look he said, "If your parents or children were present, I would have prepared them to be a rich feast for the savage animals instead of the Jews, who give me no ground for complaint and have exhibited to an extraordinary degree a full and firm loyalty to my ancestors. In fact you would have been deprived of life instead of these, if it were not for an affection arising from our nurture in common and your usefulness." So Hermon suffered an unexpected and dangerous threat, and his eyes wavered and his face fell. The king's Friends one by one sullenly slipped away and dismissed the assembled people to their own occupations. Then the Jews, on hearing what the king had said, praised the manifest Lord God, King of kings, since this also was his aid that they had received.

The king, however, reconvened the party in the same manner and urged the guests to return to their celebrating. After summoning Hermon he said in a threatening tone, "How many times, you poor wretch, must I give you orders about these things? Equip the elephants now once more for the destruction of the Jews tomorrow!" But the officials who were at table with him, wondering at his instability of mind, remonstrated as follows: "O king, how long will you put us to the test, as though we are idiots, ordering now for a third time that they be destroyed, and again revoking your decree in the matter? As a result the city is in a tumult because of its expectation; it is crowded with masses of people, and also in constant danger of being plundered."
42 At this the king, a Phalaris in everything and filled with madness, took no account of the changes of mind that had come about within him for the protection of the Jews, and he firmly swore an irrevocable oath that he would send them to death without delay, mangled by the knees and feet of the animals, 43 and would also march against Judea and rapidly level it to the ground with fire and spear, and by burning to the ground the temple inaccessible to him would quickly render it forever empty of those who offered sacrifices there. 44 Then the Friends and officers departed with great joy, and they confidently posted the armed forces at the places in the city most favorable for keeping guard.

45 Now when the animals had been brought virtually to a state of madness, so to speak, by the very fragrant draughts of wine mixed with frankincense and had been equipped with frightful devices, the elephant keeper 46 entered at about dawn into the courtyard — the city now being filled with countless masses of people crowding their way into the hippodrome — and urged the king on to the matter at hand. 47 So he, when he had filled his impious mind with a deep rage, rushed out in full force along with the animals, wishing to witness, with invulnerable heart and with his own eyes, the grievous and pitiful destruction of the aforementioned people.

48 When the Jews saw the dust raised by the elephants going out at the gate and by the following armed forces, as well as by the trampling of the crowd, and heard the loud and tumultuous noise, 49 they thought that this was their last moment of life, the end of their most miserable suspense, and giving way to lamentation and groans they kissed each other, embracing relatives and falling into one another's arms — parents and children, mothers and daughters, and others with babies at their breasts who were drawing their last milk. 50 Not only this, but when they considered the help that they had received before from heaven, they prostrated themselves with one accord on the ground, removing the babies from their breasts, 51 and cried out in a very loud voice, imploring the Ruler over every power to manifest himself and be merciful to them, as they stood now at the gates of death.
Then a certain Eleazar, famous among the priests of the country, who had attained a ripe old age and throughout his life had been adorned with every virtue, directed the elders around him to stop calling upon the holy God, and he prayed as follows: 

"King of great power, Almighty God Most High, governing all creation with mercy, look upon the descendants of Abraham, O Father, upon the children of the sainted Jacob, a people of your consecrated portion who are perishing as foreigners in a foreign land. Pharaoh with his abundance of chariots, the former ruler of this Egypt, exalted with lawless insolence and boastful tongue, you destroyed together with his arrogant army by drowning them in the sea, manifesting the light of your mercy on the nation of Israel. Sennacherib exulting in his countless forces, oppressive king of the Assyrians, who had already gained control of the whole world by the spear and was lifted up against your holy city, speaking grievous words with boasting and insolence, you, O Lord, broke in pieces, showing your power to many nations. The three companions in Babylon who had voluntarily surrendered their lives to the flames so as not to serve vain things, you rescued unharmed, even to a hair, moistening the fiery furnace with dew and turning the flame against all their enemies. Daniel, who through envious slanders was thrown down into the ground to lions as food for wild animals, you brought up to the light unharmed. And Jonah, wasting away in the belly of a huge, sea-born monster, you, Father, watched over and restored unharmed to all his family. And now, you who hate insolence, all-merciful and protector of all, reveal yourself quickly to those of the nation of Israel — who are being outrageously treated by the abominable and lawless Gentiles.

"Even if our lives have become entangled in impieties in our exile, rescue us from the hand of the enemy, and destroy us, Lord, by whatever fate you choose. Let not the vain-minded praise their vanities at the destruction of your beloved people, saying, 'Not even their god has rescued them.' But you, O Eternal One, who have all might and all power, watch over us now and have mercy on us who by the senseless insolence of the lawless are being deprived of life in the
manner of traitors. 13 And let the Gentiles cower today in fear of your invincible might, O honored One, who have power to save the nation of Jacob. 14 The whole throng of infants and their parents entreat you with tears. 15 Let it be shown to all the Gentiles that you are with us, O Lord, and have not turned your face from us; but just as you have said, 'Not even when they were in the land of their enemies did I neglect them,' so accomplish it, O Lord."

The Jews are delivered, and the king now favors them

16 Just as Eleazar was ending his prayer, the king arrived at the hippodrome with the animals and all the arrogance of his forces. 17 And when the Jews observed this they raised great cries to heaven so that even the nearby valleys resounded with them and brought an uncontrollable terror upon the army. 18 Then the most glorious, almighty, and true God revealed his holy face and opened the heavenly gates, from which two glorious angels of fearful aspect descended, visible to all but the Jews. 19 They opposed the forces of the enemy and filled them with confusion and terror, binding them with immovable shackles. 20 Even the king began to shudder bodily, and he forgot his sullen insolence. 21 The animals turned back upon the armed forces following them and began trampling and destroying them.

22 Then the king's anger was turned to pity and tears because of the things that he had devised beforehand. 23 For when he heard the shouting and saw them all fallen headlong to destruction, he wept and angrily threatened his Friends, saying, 24 "You are committing treason and surpassing tyrants in cruelty; and even me, your benefactor, you are now attempting to deprive of dominion and life by secretly devising acts of no advantage to the kingdom. 25 Who has driven from their homes those who faithfully kept our country's fortresses, and foolishly gathered every one of them here? 26 Who is it that has so lawlessly encompassed with outrageous treatment those who from the beginning differed from all nations in their goodwill toward us and often have accepted willingly the worst of human dangers? 27 Loose and untie their unjust bonds! Send them back to their homes in peace, begging pardon for your former actions! 28 Release the children of the almighty and living God of heaven, who from the time of our ancestors
until now has granted an unimpeded and notable stability to our government." 29 These then were the things he said; and the Jews, immediately released, praised their holy God and Savior, since they now had escaped death.

30 Then the king, when he had returned to the city, summoned the official in charge of the revenues and ordered him to provide to the Jews both wines and everything else needed for a festival of seven days, deciding that they should celebrate their rescue with all joyfulness in that same place in which they had expected to meet their destruction. 31 Accordingly those disgracefully treated and near to death, or rather, who stood at its gates, arranged for a banquet of deliverance instead of a bitter and lamentable death, and full of joy they apportioned to celebrants the place that had been prepared for their destruction and burial. 32 They stopped their chanting of dirges and took up the song of their ancestors, praising God, their Savior and worker of wonders. Putting an end to all mourning and wailing, they formed choruses as a sign of peaceful joy. 33 Likewise also the king, after convening a great banquet to celebrate these events, gave thanks to heaven unceasingly and lavishly for the unexpected rescue that he had experienced. 34 Those who had previously believed that the Jews would be destroyed and become food for birds, and had joyfully registered them, groaned as they themselves were overcome by disgrace, and their fire-breathing boldness was ignominiously quenched.

35 The Jews, as we have said before, arranged the aforementioned choral group and passed the time in feasting to the accompaniment of joyous thanksgiving and psalms. 36 And when they had ordained a public rite for these things in their whole community and for their descendants, they instituted the observance of the aforesaid days as a festival, not for drinking and gluttony, but because of the deliverance that had come to them through God. 37 Then they petitioned the king, asking for dismissal to their homes. 38 So their registration was carried out from the twenty-fifth of Pachon to the fourth of Epeiph, for forty days; and their destruction was set for the fifth to the seventh of Epeiph, the three days 39 on which the Lord of all most gloriously revealed his mercy and rescued them all together and unharmed. 40
Then they feasted, being provided with everything by the king, until the fourteenth day, on which also they made the petition for their dismissal. The king granted their request at once and wrote the following letter for them to the generals in the cities, magnanimously expressing his concern:

[3 Maccabees 7]
Ptolemy's letter on behalf of the Jews

1 "King Ptolemy Philopator to the generals in Egypt and all in authority in his government, greetings and good health:

2 "We ourselves and our children are faring well, the great God guiding our affairs according to our desire. Certain of our friends, frequently urging us with malicious intent, persuaded us to gather together the Jews of the kingdom in a body and to punish them with barbarous penalties as traitors; for they declared that our government would never be firmly established until this was accomplished, because of the ill-will that these people had toward all nations. They also led them out with harsh treatment as slaves, or rather as traitors, and, girding themselves with a cruelty more savage than that of Scythian custom, they tried without any inquiry or examination to put them to death. But we very severely threatened them for these acts, and in accordance with the clemency that we have toward all people we barely spared their lives. Since we have come to realize that the God of heaven surely defends the Jews, always taking their part as a father does for his children, and since we have taken into account the friendly and firm goodwill that they had toward us and our ancestors, we justly have acquitted them of every charge of whatever kind. We also have ordered all people to return to their own homes, with no one in any place doing them harm at all or reproaching them for the irrational things that have happened. For you should know that if we devise any evil against them or cause them any grief at all, we always shall have not a mortal but the Ruler over every power, the Most High God, in everything and inescapably as an antagonist to avenge such acts. Farewell."
The Jews punish the renegades and return home

10 On receiving this letter the Jews did not immediately hurry to make their departure, but they requested of the king that at their own hands those of the Jewish nation who had willfully transgressed against the holy God and the law of God should receive the punishment they deserved. 11 They declared that those who for the belly's sake had transgressed the divine commandments would never be favorably disposed toward the king's government. 12 The king then, admitting and approving the truth of what they said, granted them a general license so that freely, and without royal authority or supervision, they might destroy those everywhere in his kingdom who had transgressed the law of God. 13 When they had applauded him in fitting manner, their priests and the whole multitude shouted the Hallelujah and joyfully departed. 14 And so on their way they punished and put to a public and shameful death any whom they met of their compatriots who had become defiled. 15 In that day they put to death more than three hundred men; and they kept the day as a joyful festival, since they had destroyed the profaners. 16 But those who had held fast to God even to death and had received the full enjoyment of deliverance began their departure from the city, crowned with all sorts of very fragrant flowers, joyfully and loudly giving thanks to the one God of their ancestors, the eternal Savior of Israel, in words of praise and all kinds of melodious songs.

17 When they had arrived at Ptolemais, called "rose-bearing" because of a characteristic of the place, the fleet waited for them, in accordance with the common desire, for seven days. 18 There they celebrated their deliverance, for the king had generously provided all things to them for their journey until all of them arrived at their own houses. 19 And when they had all landed in peace with appropriate thanksgiving, there too in like manner they decided to observe these days as a joyous festival during the time of their stay. 20 Then, after inscribing them as holy on a pillar and dedicating a place of prayer at the site of the festival, they departed unharmed, free, and overjoyed, since at the king's command they had all of them been brought safely by land and sea and river to their own homes. 21 They also possessed greater prestige among their enemies, being held in honor and awe;
and they were not subject at all to confiscation of their belongings by anyone. 22 Besides, they all recovered all of their property, in accordance with the registration, so that those who held any of it restored it to them with extreme fear. So the supreme God perfectly performed great deeds for their deliverance. 23 Blessed be the Deliverer of Israel through all times! Amen.
Introduction

The book known as 2 Esdras is actually a composite work made up of three separate writings: 5 Ezra (chs 1-2), 4 Ezra (chs 3-14), and 6 Ezra (chs 15-16).

Fourth Ezra, the longest and most complex of the three, is also the earliest. Written in Hebrew by an anonymous Jew in Israel near the end of the first century CE, it sets forth its author's anguished reflections on the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. The author adopts the pseudonym of Ezra, whom he presents as living after the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians in 586 BCE, and also refers to Rome by a pseudonym, "Babylon." Thus he writes on two levels, comparing his own situation with that of his eponymous biblical hero. The book's central concern is the issue of theodicy: How could a just God allow such misfortunes to happen to God's chosen people?

The author of 4 Ezra is a deeply reflective and highly imaginative thinker, who is moreover skilled and sophisticated enough to present divergent theological viewpoints in different parts of the book. In the first three of the book's seven "visions," Ezra, the book's spirited and loquacious hero, argues persuasively a profoundly humanistic viewpoint that stresses the ideals of God's mercy, justice, and care for humanity, especially Israel. Ezra is rebuffed time and again, however, by his angelic interlocutor, who emphasizes the limitations of human reasoning.

In a fourth vision, the book's central and pivotal section, Ezra experiences a profound psychological shift (a "conversion" experience) from his previous attitude to a state of unquestioning acceptance of God's will. As a sign of this transition he receives a mystical vision of
the heavenly Jerusalem. Equipped with his newly acquired state of mind, Ezra in the last section of the book receives two further mystical visions (the fifth and sixth), both indicating that the true solution to the problem of God's justice is an apocalyptic one: The suffering righteous will receive their reward at the end of the world. Finally, in the climactic seventh vision, the inspired Ezra is granted permission by God to rewrite the scriptures that had been burned by the "Babylonians," but with one variation: In addition to the traditional books of the Hebrew canon, he writes seventy secret books mean for the "wise" among his people. Fourth Ezra's author thus displays his penchant for mystical, esoteric, and apocalyptic modes of thinking and his conviction that these hold the answers to the ethical and theological dilemmas of Israel, and indeed of all humankind.

In the course of the second century CE, 4 Ezra was translated into Greek; from Greek it was rendered into a plethora of other languages. Although the Hebrew and Greek texts have been lost with time, the book is attested today in no less than eight versions: Latin, Syriac, Ethiopic, Georgian, Armenian, two independent Arabic versions, and a fragmentary Coptic version. This large number of translations is evidence of the book's immense popularity in the various Christian churches of the early Middle Ages.

Fifth Ezra, a Christian writing of the second or third century CE, is also pseudonymously ascribed to Ezra. It was composed in either Greek or Latin; its place of composition is uncertain. Fifth Ezra reflects the growing tension between Christian and Jewish communities. It indicts the people of Israel for their sins and "predicts" the coming of a new people (the Christians) who will inherit Israel's patrimony.

Sixth Ezra is a Christian composition of the third century CE, probably from Asia Minor. In it an anonymous prophet predicts terrible catastrophes that will afflict the whole earth as a result of human iniquity and warns God's "elect" to abstain from sin if they wish to escape the calamities. The book reflects a situation in which its Christian community was experiencing persecution and strives to convince its audience to stand firm. Although 6 Ezra survives in full only in Latin, a fourth-century Greek parchment fragment of 15.57-59
found at Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, indicates that the book was composed in Greek.
At some time before 400 CE, a Latin form of 6 Ezra was appended to the end of 4 Ezra. In turn, a Latin form of 5 Ezra was later added to the end of that corpus, probably before 450 CE. Then, prior to 800 CE, 5 Ezra was moved to the head of the corpus, resulting in the form of the book known today.

[2 Esdras 1]
(Chs 1-2 comprise a separate literary composition also known as 5 Ezra.)
Ascription

1 The book of the prophet Ezra son of Seraiah, son of Azariah, son of Hilkiah, son of Shallum, son of Zadok, son of Ahitub, 2 son of Ahijah, son of Phinehas, son of Eli, son of Amariah, son of Azariah, son of Meraimoth, son of Arna, son of Uzzi, son of Borith, son of Abishua, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, 3 son of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi, who was a captive in the country of the Medes in the reign of Artaxerxes, king of the Persians.

A prophetic indictment against Israel; Prophetic historical recital of God's benefits during the Exodus

4 The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 "Go, declare to my people their evil deeds, and to their children the iniquities that they have committed against me, so that they may tell their children's children 6 that the sins of their parents have increased in them, for they have forgotten me and have offered sacrifices to strange gods. 7 Was it not I who brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage? But they have angered me and despised my counsels. 8 Now you, pull out the hair of your head and hurl all evils upon them, for they have not obeyed my law — they are a rebellious people. 9 How long shall I endure them, on whom I have bestowed such great benefits? 10 For their sake I have overthrown many kings; I
struck down Pharaoh with his servants and all his army. 11 I destroyed all nations before them, and scattered in the east the peoples of two provinces, Tyre and Sidon; I killed all their enemies.

12 "But speak to them and say, Thus says the Lord: 13 Surely it was I who brought you through the sea, and made safe highways for you where there was no road; I gave you Moses as leader and Aaron as priest; 14 I provided light for you from a pillar of fire, and did great wonders among you. Yet you have forgotten me, says the Lord.

15 "Thus says the Lord Almighty: The quails were a sign to you; I gave you camps for your protection, and in them you complained. 16 You have not exulted in my name at the destruction of your enemies, but to this day you still complain. 17 Where are the benefits that I bestowed on you? When you were hungry and thirsty in the wilderness, did you not cry out to me, 18 saying, 'Why have you led us into this wilderness to kill us? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in this wilderness.' 19 I pitied your groanings and gave you manna for food; you ate the bread of angels. 20 When you were thirsty, did I not split the rock so that waters flowed in abundance? Because of the heat I clothed you with the leaves of trees. 21 I divided fertile lands among you; I drove out the Canaanites, the Perizzites, and the Philistines before you. What more can I do for you? says the Lord. 22 Thus says the Lord Almighty: When you were in the wilderness, at the bitter stream, thirsty and blaspheming my name, 23 I did not send fire on you for your blasphemies, but threw a tree into the water and made the stream sweet.

Pronouncement of judgment against Israel

24 "What shall I do to you, O Jacob? You, Judah, would not obey me. I will turn to other nations and will give them my name, so that they may keep my statutes. 25 Because you have forsaken me, I also will forsake you. When you beg mercy of me, I will show you no mercy. 26 When you call to me, I will not listen to you; for you have defiled your hands with blood, and your feet are swift to commit murder. 27 It is not as though you had forsaken me; you have forsaken yourselves, says the Lord.
"Thus says the Lord Almighty: Have I not entreated you as a father entreats his sons or a mother her daughters or a nurse her children, so that you should be my people and I should be your God, and that you should be my children and I should be your father? I gathered you as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But now, what shall I do to you? I will cast you out from my presence. When you offer oblations to me, I will turn my face from you; for I have rejected your festal days, and new moons, and circumcisions of the flesh. I sent you my servants the prophets, but you have taken and killed them and torn their bodies in pieces; I will require their blood of you, says the Lord.

"Thus says the Lord Almighty: Your house is desolate; I will drive you out as the wind drives straw; and your sons will have no children, because with you they have neglected my commandment and have done what is evil in my sight. I will give your houses to a people that will come, who without having heard me will believe. Those to whom I have shown no signs will do what I have commanded. They have seen no prophets, yet will recall their former state. I call to witness the gratitude of the people that is to come, whose children rejoice with gladness; though they do not see me with bodily eyes, yet with the spirit they will believe the things I have said.

Vision of the coming people

"And now, father, look with pride and see the people coming from the east; to them I will give as leaders Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Hosea and Amos and Micah and Joel and Obadiah and Jonah and Nahum and Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, who is also called the messenger of the Lord.

[2 Esdras 2]

Further pronouncement of judgment

"Thus says the Lord: I brought this people out of bondage, and I gave them commandments through my servants the prophets; but they would not listen to them, and made my counsels void. The mother who bore them says to them, 'Go, my children, because I am a widow
and forsaken. 3 I brought you up with gladness; but with mourning and sorrow I have lost you, because you have sinned before the Lord God and have done what is evil in my sight. 4 But now what can I do for you? For I am a widow and forsaken. Go, my children, and ask for mercy from the Lord. 5 Now I call upon you, father, as a witness in addition to the mother of the children, because they would not keep my covenant, 6 so that you may bring confusion on them and bring their mother to ruin, so that they may have no offspring. 7 Let them be scattered among the nations; let their names be blotted out from the earth, because they have despised my covenant.

8 "Woe to you, Assyria, who conceal the unrighteous within you! O wicked nation, remember what I did to Sodom and Gomorrah, 9 whose land lies in lumps of pitch and heaps of ashes. That is what I will do to those who have not listened to me, says the Lord Almighty."

Prophetic exhortation of the new people; Blessing and instruction

10 Thus says the Lord to Ezra: "Tell my people that I will give them the kingdom of Jerusalem, which I was going to give to Israel. 11 Moreover, I will take back to myself their glory, and will give to these others the everlasting habitations, which I had prepared for Israel. 12 The tree of life shall give them fragrant perfume, and they shall neither toil nor become weary. 13 Go and you will receive; pray that your days may be few, that they may be shortened. The kingdom is already prepared for you; be on the watch! 14 Call, O call heaven and earth to witness: I set aside evil and created good; for I am the Living One, says the Lord.

Exhortation of the mother

15 "Mother, embrace your children; bring them up with gladness, as does a dove; strengthen their feet, because I have chosen you, says the Lord. 16 And I will raise up the dead from their places, and bring them out from their tombs, because I recognize my name in them. 17 Do not fear, mother of children, for I have chosen you, says the Lord. 18 I will send you help, my servants Isaiah and Jeremiah. According to their counsel I have consecrated and prepared for you twelve trees loaded with various fruits, 19 and the same number of springs flowing with
milk and honey, and seven mighty mountains on which roses and lilies grow; by these I will fill your children with joy.

20 "Guard the rights of the widow, secure justice for the ward, give to the needy, defend the orphan, clothe the naked, care for the injured and the weak, do not ridicule the lame, protect the maimed, and let the blind have a vision of my splendor. 22 Protect the old and the young within your walls. 23 When you find any who are dead, commit them to the grave and mark it, and I will give you the first place in my resurrection. 24 Pause and be quiet, my people, because your rest will come.

25 "Good nurse, nourish your children; strengthen their feet. 26 Not one of the servants whom I have given you will perish, for I will require them from among your number. 27 Do not be anxious, for when the day of tribulation and anguish comes, others shall weep and be sorrowful, but you shall rejoice and have abundance. 28 The nations shall envy you, but they shall not be able to do anything against you, says the Lord. 29 My power will protect you, so that your children may not see hell.

30 "Rejoice, O mother, with your children, because I will deliver you, says the Lord. 31 Remember your children that sleep, because I will bring them out of the hiding places of the earth, and will show mercy to them; for I am merciful, says the Lord Almighty. 32 Embrace your children until I come, and proclaim mercy to them; because my springs run over, and my grace will not fail."

Encouragement of the "nations"

33 I, Ezra, received a command from the Lord on Mount Horeb to go to Israel. When I came to them they rejected me and refused the Lord's commandment. 34 Therefore I say to you, O nations that hear and understand, "Wait for your shepherd; he will give you everlasting rest, because he who will come at the end of the age is close at hand. 35 Be ready for the rewards of the kingdom, because perpetual light will shine on you forevermore. 36 Flee from the shadow of this age, receive the joy of your glory; I publicly call on my savior to witness. 37 Receive
what the Lord has entrusted to you and be joyful, giving thanks to him who has called you to the celestial kingdoms. 38 Rise, stand erect and see the number of those who have been sealed at the feast of the Lord. 39 Those who have departed from the shadow of this age have received glorious garments from the Lord. 40 Take again your full number, O Zion, and close the list of your people who are clothed in white, who have fulfilled the law of the Lord. 41 The number of your children, whom you desired, is now complete; implore the Lord’s authority that your people, who have been called from the beginning, may be made holy."

Ezra's vision of a great multitude

42 I, Ezra, saw on Mount Zion a great multitude that I could not number, and they all were praising the Lord with songs. 43 In their midst was a young man of great stature, taller than any of the others, and on the head of each of them he placed a crown, but he was more exalted than they. And I was held spellbound. 44 Then I asked an angel, "Who are these, my lord?" 45 He answered and said to me, "These are they who have put off mortal clothing and have put on the immortal, and have confessed the name of God. Now they are being crowned, and receive palms." 46 Then I said to the angel, "Who is that young man who is placing crowns on them and putting palms in their hands?" 47 He answered and said to me, "He is the Son of God, whom they confessed in the world." So I began to praise those who had stood valiantly for the name of the Lord. 48 Then the angel said to me, "Go, tell my people how great and how many are the wonders of the Lord God that you have seen."

[2 Esdras 3]
(Chs 3-14 comprise a separate literary composition also known as 4 Ezra.)
The first vision; Introduction

1 In the thirtieth year after the destruction of the city, I was in Babylon — I, Salathiel, who am also called Ezra. I was troubled as I lay on my bed, and my thoughts welled up in my heart, 2 because I saw the desolation of Zion and the wealth of those who lived in Babylon. 3 My
spirit was greatly agitated, and I began to speak anxious words to the
Most High, and said,

Addressing God, the author raises perplexing questions

4 "O sovereign Lord, did you not speak at the beginning when you
planted the earth — and that without help — and commanded the
dust 5 and it gave you Adam, a lifeless body? Yet he was the creation
of your hands, and you breathed into him the breath of life, and he
was made alive in your presence. 6 And you led him into the garden
that your right hand had planted before the earth appeared. 7 And
you laid upon him one commandment of yours; but he transgressed it,
and immediately you appointed death for him and for his descendants.
From him there sprang nations and tribes, peoples and clans without
number. 8 And every nation walked after its own will; they did
ungodly things in your sight and rejected your commands, and you did
not hinder them. 9 But again, in its time you brought the flood upon
the inhabitants of the world and destroyed them. 10 And the same fate
befell all of them: just as death came upon Adam, so the flood upon
them. 11 But you left one of them, Noah with his household, and all the
righteous who have descended from him.

12 "When those who lived on earth began to multiply, they produced
children and peoples and many nations, and again they began to be
more ungodly than were their ancestors. 13 And when they were
committing iniquity in your sight, you chose for yourself one of them,
whose name was Abraham; 14 you loved him, and to him alone you
revealed the end of the times, secretly by night. 15 You made an
everlasting covenant with him, and promised him that you would
never forsake his descendants; and you gave him Isaac, and to Isaac you
gave Jacob and Esau. 16 You set apart Jacob for yourself, but Esau you
rejected; and Jacob became a great multitude. 17 And when you led his
descendants out of Egypt, you brought them to Mount Sinai. 18 You
bent down the heavens and shook the earth, and moved the world,
and caused the depths to tremble, and troubled the times. 19 Your
glory passed through the four gates of fire and earthquake and wind
and ice, to give the law to the descendants of Jacob, and your
commandment to the posterity of Israel.
20 "Yet you did not take away their evil heart from them, so that your law might produce fruit in them. 21 For the first Adam, burdened with an evil heart, transgressed and was overcome, as were also all who were descended from him. 22 Thus the disease became permanent; the law was in the hearts of the people along with the evil root; but what was good departed, and the evil remained. 23 So the times passed and the years were completed, and you raised up for yourself a servant, named David. 24 You commanded him to build a city for your name, and there to offer you oblations from what is yours. 25 This was done for many years; but the inhabitants of the city transgressed, 26 in everything doing just as Adam and all his descendants had done, for they also had the evil heart. 27 So you handed over your city to your enemies.

28 "Then I said in my heart, Are the deeds of those who inhabit Babylon any better? Is that why it has gained dominion over Zion? 29 For when I came here I saw ungodly deeds without number, and my soul has seen many sinners during these thirty years. And my heart failed me, 30 because I have seen how you endure those who sin, and have spared those who act wickedly, and have destroyed your people, and protected your enemies, 31 and have not shown to anyone how your way may be comprehended. Are the deeds of Babylon better than those of Zion? 32 Or has another nation known you besides Israel? Or what tribes have so believed the covenants as these tribes of Jacob? 33 Yet their reward has not appeared and their labor has borne no fruit. For I have traveled widely among the nations and have seen that they abound in wealth, though they are unmindful of your commandments. 34 Now therefore weigh in a balance our iniquities and those of the inhabitants of the world; and it will be found which way the turn of the scale will incline. 35 When have the inhabitants of the earth not sinned in your sight? Or what nation has kept your commandments so well? 36 You may indeed find individuals who have kept your commandments, but nations you will not find."
[2 Esdras 4]
Dialogic dispute between Ezra and the angel Uriel

1 Then the angel that had been sent to me, whose name was Uriel, answered 2 and said to me, "Your understanding has utterly failed regarding this world, and do you think you can comprehend the way of the Most High?" 3 Then I said, "Yes, my lord." And he replied to me, "I have been sent to show you three ways, and to put before you three problems. 4 If you can solve one of them for me, then I will show you the way you desire to see, and will teach you why the heart is evil."

5 I said, "Speak, my lord."

And he said to me, "Go, weigh for me the weight of fire, or measure for me a blast of wind, or call back for me the day that is past."

6 I answered and said, "Who of those that have been born can do that, that you should ask me about such things?"

7 And he said to me, "If I had asked you, 'How many dwellings are in the heart of the sea, or how many streams are at the source of the deep, or how many streams are above the firmament, or which are the exits of Hades, or which are the entrances of paradise?' 8 perhaps you would have said to me, 'I never went down into the deep, nor as yet into Hades, neither did I ever ascend into heaven.' 9 But now I have asked you only about fire and wind and the day — things that you have experienced and from which you cannot be separated, and you have given me no answer about them." 10 He said to me, "You cannot understand the things with which you have grown up; 11 how then can your mind comprehend the way of the Most High? And how can one who is already worn out by the corrupt world understand incorruption?" When I heard this, I fell on my face 12 and said to him, "It would have been better for us not to be here than to come here and live in ungodliness, and to suffer and not understand why."

13 He answered me and said, "I went into a forest of trees of the plain, and they made a plan 14 and said, 'Come, let us go and make war against the sea, so that it may recede before us and so that we may
make for ourselves more forests.' 15 In like manner the waves of the sea also made a plan and said, 'Come, let us go up and subdue the forest of the plain so that there also we may gain more territory for ourselves.' 16 But the plan of the forest was in vain, for the fire came and consumed it; 17 likewise also the plan of the waves of the sea was in vain, for the sand stood firm and blocked it. 18 If now you were a judge between them, which would you undertake to justify, and which to condemn?"

19 I answered and said, "Each made a foolish plan, for the land has been assigned to the forest, and the locale of the sea a place to carry its waves."

20 He answered me and said, "You have judged rightly, but why have you not judged so in your own case? 21 For as the land has been assigned to the forest and the sea to its waves, so also those who inhabit the earth can understand only what is on the earth, and he who is above the heavens can understand what is above the height of the heavens."

22 Then I answered and said, "I implore you, my lord, why have I been endowed with the power of understanding? 23 For I did not wish to inquire about the ways above, but about those things that we daily experience: why Israel has been given over to the Gentiles in disgrace; why the people whom you loved has been given over to godless tribes, and the law of our ancestors has been brought to destruction and the written covenants no longer exist. 24 We pass from the world like locusts, and our life is like a mist, and we are not worthy to obtain mercy. 25 But what will he do for his name that is invoked over us? It is about these things that I have asked."

Dialogic prediction regarding the future

26 He answered me and said, "If you are alive, you will see, and if you live long, you will often marvel, because the age is hurrying swiftly to its end. 27 It will not be able to bring the things that have been promised to the righteous in their appointed times, because this age is full of sadness and infirmities. 28 For the evil about which you ask me
has been sown, but the harvest of it has not yet come. 29 If therefore that which has been sown is not reaped, and if the place where the evil has been sown does not pass away, the field where the good has been sown will not come. 30 For a grain of evil seed was sown in Adam's heart from the beginning, and how much ungodliness it has produced until now — and will produce until the time of threshing comes! 31 Consider now for yourself how much fruit of ungodliness a grain of evil seed has produced. 32 When heads of grain without number are sown, how great a threshing floor they will fill!

33 Then I answered and said, "How long? When will these things be? Why are our years few and evil?" 34 He answered me and said, "Do not be in a greater hurry than the Most High. You, indeed, are in a hurry for yourself, but the Highest is in a hurry on behalf of many. 35 Did not the souls of the righteous in their chambers ask about these matters, saying, 'How long are we to remain here? And when will the harvest of our reward come?' 36 And the archangel Jeremiel answered and said, 'When the number of those like yourselves is completed; for he has weighed the age in the balance, 37 and measured the times by measure, and numbered the times by number; and he will not move or arouse them until that measure is fulfilled.'"

38 Then I answered and said, "But, O sovereign Lord, all of us also are full of ungodliness. 39 It is perhaps on account of us that the time of threshing is delayed for the righteous — on account of the sins of those who inhabit the earth."

40 He answered me and said, "Go and ask a pregnant woman whether, when her nine months have been completed, her womb can keep the fetus within her any longer."

41 And I said, "No, lord, it cannot."

He said to me, "In Hades the chambers of the souls are like the womb. 42 For just as a woman who is in labor makes haste to escape the pangs of birth, so also do these places hasten to give back those things that were committed to them from the beginning. 43 Then the things that you desire to see will be disclosed to you."
44 I answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, and if it is possible, and if I am worthy, 45 show me this also: whether more time is to come than has passed, or whether for us the greater part has gone by. 46 For I know what has gone by, but I do not know what is to come."

47 And he said to me, "Stand at my right side, and I will show you the interpretation of a parable."

48 So I stood and looked, and lo, a flaming furnace passed by before me, and when the flame had gone by I looked, and lo, the smoke remained. 49 And after this a cloud full of water passed before me and poured down a heavy and violent rain, and when the violent rainstorm had passed, drops still remained in the cloud.

50 He said to me, "Consider it for yourself; for just as the rain is more than the drops, and the fire is greater than the smoke, so the quantity that passed was far greater; but drops and smoke remained."

51 Then I prayed and said, "Do you think that I shall live until those days? Or who will be alive in those days?"

52 He answered me and said, "Concerning the signs about which you ask me, I can tell you in part; but I was not sent to tell you concerning your life, for I do not know.

[2 Esdras 5]
Direct prediction of the future by the angel

1 "Now concerning the signs: lo, the days are coming when those who inhabit the earth shall be seized with great terror, and the way of truth shall be hidden, and the land shall be barren of faith. 2 Unrighteousness shall be increased beyond what you yourself see, and beyond what you heard of formerly. 3 And the land that you now see ruling shall be a trackless waste, and people shall see it desolate. 4 But if the Most High grants that you live, you shall see it thrown into confusion after the third period;"
and the sun shall suddenly begin to shine at night,
and the moon during the day.
5 Blood shall drip from wood,
and the stone shall utter its voice;
the peoples shall be troubled,
and the stars shall fall.

6 And one shall reign whom those who inhabit the earth do not
expect, and the birds shall fly away together; 7 and the Dead Sea shall
cast up fish; and one whom the many do not know shall make his voice
heard by night, and all shall hear his voice. 8 There shall be chaos also
in many places, fire shall often break out, the wild animals shall roam
beyond their haunts, and menstruous women shall bring forth
monsters. 9 Salt waters shall be found in the sweet, and all friends shall
conquer one another; then shall reason hide itself, and wisdom shall
withdraw into its chamber, 10 and it shall be sought by many but shall
not be found, and unrighteousness and unrestraint shall increase on
earth. 11 One country shall ask its neighbor, 'Has righteousness, or
anyone who does right, passed through you?' And it will answer, 'No.'
12 At that time people shall hope but not obtain; they shall labor, but
their ways shall not prosper. 13 These are the signs that I am permitted
to tell you, and if you pray again, and weep as you do now, and fast
for seven days, you shall hear yet greater things than these."

Conclusion of the vision

14 Then I woke up, and my body shuddered violently, and my soul was
so troubled that it fainted. 15 But the angel who had come and talked
with me held me and strengthened me and set me on my feet.

16 Now on the second night Phaltiel, a chief of the people, came to me
and said, "Where have you been? And why is your face sad? 17 Or do
you not know that Israel has been entrusted to you in the land of their
exile? 18 Rise therefore and eat some bread, and do not forsake us, like
a shepherd who leaves the flock in the power of savage wolves."

19 Then I said to him, "Go away from me and do not come near me for
seven days; then you may come to me."
He heard what I said and left me. 20 So I fasted seven days, mourning and weeping, as the angel Uriel had commanded me.

The second vision; Introduction

21 After seven days the thoughts of my heart were very grievous to me again. 22 Then my soul recovered the spirit of understanding, and I began once more to speak words in the presence of the Most High.

Addressing God, the seer reiterates his complaints of divine injustice in dealing with Israel

23 I said, "O sovereign Lord, from every forest of the earth and from all its trees you have chosen one vine, 24 and from all the lands of the world you have chosen for yourself one region, and from all the flowers of the world you have chosen for yourself one lily, 25 and from all the depths of the sea you have filled for yourself one river, and from all the cities that have been built you have consecrated Zion for yourself, 26 and from all the birds that have been created you have named for yourself one dove, and from all the flocks that have been made you have provided for yourself one sheep, 27 and from all the multitude of peoples you have gotten for yourself one people; and to this people, whom you have loved, you have given the law that is approved by all. 28 And now, O Lord, why have you handed the one over to the many, and dishonored the one root beyond the others, and scattered your only one among the many? 29 And those who opposed your promises have trampled on those who believed your covenants. 30 If you really hate your people, they should be punished at your own hands."

Dialogic dispute with the angel

31 When I had spoken these words, the angel who had come to me on a previous night was sent to me. 32 He said to me, "Listen to me, and I will instruct you; pay attention to me, and I will tell you more."
33 Then I said, "Speak, my lord." And he said to me, "Are you greatly disturbed in mind over Israel? Or do you love him more than his Maker does?"

34 I said, "No, my lord, but because of my grief I have spoken; for every hour I suffer agonies of heart, while I strive to understand the way of the Most High and to search out some part of his judgment."

35 He said to me, "You cannot." And I said, "Why not, my lord? Why then was I born? Or why did not my mother's womb become my grave, so that I would not see the travail of Jacob and the exhaustion of the people of Israel?"

36 He said to me, "Count up for me those who have not yet come, and gather for me the scattered raindrops, and make the withered flowers bloom again for me; 37 open for me the closed chambers, and bring out for me the winds shut up in them, or show me the picture of a voice; and then I will explain to you the travail that you ask to understand."

38 I said, "O sovereign Lord, who is able to know these things except him whose dwelling is not with mortals? 39 As for me, I am without wisdom, and how can I speak concerning the things that you have asked me?"

40 He said to me, "Just as you cannot do one of the things that were mentioned, so you cannot discover my judgment, or the goal of the love that I have promised to my people."

**Dialogic prediction concerning the future**

41 I said, "Yet, O Lord, you have charge of those who are alive at the end, but what will those do who lived before me, or we, ourselves, or those who come after us?"

42 He said to me, "I shall liken my judgment to a circle; just as for those who are last there is no slowness, so for those who are first there is no haste."
43 Then I answered and said, "Could you not have created at one time those who have been and those who are and those who will be, so that you might show your judgment the sooner?"

44 He replied to me and said, "The creation cannot move faster than the Creator, nor can the world hold at one time those who have been created in it."

45 I said, "How have you said to your servant that you will certainly give life at one time to your creation? If therefore all creatures will live at one time and the creation will sustain them, it might even now be able to support all of them present at one time."

46 He said to me, "Ask a woman's womb, and say to it, 'If you bear ten children, why one after another?' Request it therefore to produce ten at one time."

47 I said, "Of course it cannot, but only each in its own time."

48 He said to me, "Even so I have given the womb of the earth to those who from time to time are sown in it. 49 For as an infant does not bring forth, and a woman who has become old does not bring forth any longer, so I have made the same rule for the world that I created."

50 Then I inquired and said, "Since you have now given me the opportunity, let me speak before you. Is our mother, of whom you have told me, still young? Or is she now approaching old age?"

51 He replied to me, "Ask a woman who bears children, and she will tell you. 52 Say to her, 'Why are those whom you have borne recently not like those whom you bore before, but smaller in stature?' 53 And she herself will answer you, 'Those born in the strength of youth are different from those born during the time of old age, when the womb is failing.' 54 Therefore you also should consider that you and your contemporaries are smaller in stature than those who were before you, 55 and those who come after you will be smaller than you, as born of a creation that already is aging and passing the strength of youth."
I said, "I implore you, O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, show your servant through whom you will visit your creation."

[2 Esdras 6]

1 He said to me, "At the beginning of the circle of the earth, before the portals of the world were in place, and before the assembled winds blew, 2 and before the rumblings of thunder sounded, and before the flashes of lightning shone, and before the foundations of paradise were laid, 3 and before the beautiful flowers were seen, and before the powers of movements were established, and before the innumerable hosts of angels were gathered together, 4 and before the heights of the air were lifted up, and before the measures of the firmaments were named, and before the footstool of Zion was established, 5 and before the present years were reckoned and before the imaginations of those who now sin were estranged, and before those who stored up treasures of faith were sealed — 6 then I planned these things, and they were made through me alone and not through another; just as the end shall come through me alone and not through another."

7 I answered and said, "What will be the dividing of the times? Or when will be the end of the first age and the beginning of the age that follows?"

8 He said to me, "From Abraham to Isaac, because from him were born Jacob and Esau, for Jacob's hand held Esau's heel from the beginning. 9 Now Esau is the end of this age, and Jacob is the beginning of the age that follows. 10 The beginning of a person is the hand, and the end of a person is the heel; seek for nothing else, Ezra, between the heel and the hand, Ezra!"

Direct prediction of the future

11 I answered and said, "O sovereign Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, 12 show your servant the last of your signs of which you showed me a part on a previous night."
13 He answered and said to me, "Rise to your feet and you will hear a full, resounding voice. 14 And if the place where you are standing is greatly shaken 15 while the voice is speaking, do not be terrified; because the word concerns the end, and the foundations of the earth will understand 16 that the speech concerns them. They will tremble and be shaken, for they know that their end must be changed."

17 When I heard this, I got to my feet and listened; a voice was speaking, and its sound was like the sound of mighty waters. 18 It said, "The days are coming when I draw near to visit the inhabitants of the earth, 19 and when I require from the doers of iniquity the penalty of their iniquity, and when the humiliation of Zion is complete. 20 When the seal is placed upon the age that is about to pass away, then I will show these signs: the books shall be opened before the face of the firmament, and all shall see my judgment together. 21 Children a year old shall speak with their voices, and pregnant women shall give birth to premature children at three and four months, and these shall live and leap about. 22 Sown places shall suddenly appear unsown, and full storehouses shall suddenly be found to be empty; 23 the trumpet shall sound aloud, and when all hear it, they shall suddenly be terrified. 24 At that time friends shall make war on friends like enemies, the earth and those who inhabit it shall be terrified, and the springs of the fountains shall stand still, so that for three hours they shall not flow.

25 "It shall be that whoever remains after all that I have foretold to you shall be saved and shall see my salvation and the end of my world. 26 And they shall see those who were taken up, who from their birth have not tasted death; and the heart of the earth's inhabitants shall be changed and converted to a different spirit. 27 For evil shall be blotted out, and deceit shall be quenched; 28 faithfulness shall flourish, and corruption shall be overcome, and the truth, which has been so long without fruit, shall be revealed."

The conclusion of the vision

29 While he spoke to me, little by little the place where I was standing began to rock to and fro. 30 And he said to me, "I have come to show you these things this night. 31 If therefore you will pray again and fast
again for seven days, I will again declare to you greater things than these, 32 because your voice has surely been heard by the Most High; for the Mighty One has seen your uprightness and has also observed the purity that you have maintained from your youth. 33 Therefore he sent me to show you all these things, and to say to you: 'Believe and do not be afraid! 34 Do not be quick to think vain thoughts concerning the former times; then you will not act hastily in the last times.'"

The third vision

35 Now after this I wept again and fasted seven days in the same way as before, in order to complete the three weeks that had been prescribed for me. 36 Then on the eighth night my heart was troubled within me again, and I began to speak in the presence of the Most High. 37 My spirit was greatly aroused, and my soul was in distress.

Addressing God, the seer recounts God's work in six days of creation

38 I said, "O Lord, you spoke at the beginning of creation, and said on the first day, 'Let heaven and earth be made,' and your word accomplished the work. 39 Then the spirit was blowing, and darkness and silence embraced everything; the sound of human voices was not yet there. 40 Then you commanded a ray of light to be brought out from your store-chambers, so that your works could be seen.

41 "Again, on the second day, you created the spirit of the firmament, and commanded it to divide and separate the waters, so that one part might move upward and the other part remain beneath.

42 "On the third day you commanded the waters to be gathered together in a seventh part of the earth; six parts you dried up and kept so that some of them might be planted and cultivated and be of service before you. 43 For your word went forth, and at once the work was done. 44 Immediately fruit came forth in endless abundance and of varied appeal to the taste, and flowers of inimitable color, and odors of inexpressible fragrance. These were made on the third day.
45 "On the fourth day you commanded the brightness of the sun, the light of the moon, and the arrangement of the stars to come into being; 46 and you commanded them to serve humankind, about to be formed.

47 "On the fifth day you commanded the seventh part, where the water had been gathered together, to bring forth living creatures, birds, and fishes; and so it was done. 48 The dumb and lifeless water produced living creatures, as it was commanded, so that therefore the nations might declare your wondrous works.

49 "Then you kept in existence two living creatures; the one you called Behemoth and the name of the other Leviathan. 50 And you separated one from the other, for the seventh part where the water had been gathered together could not hold them both. 51 And you gave Behemoth one of the parts that had been dried up on the third day, to live in it, where there are a thousand mountains; 52 but to Leviathan you gave the seventh part, the watery part; and you have kept them to be eaten by whom you wish, and when you wish.

53 "On the sixth day you commanded the earth to bring forth before you cattle, wild animals, and creeping things; 54 and over these you placed Adam, as ruler over all the works that you had made; and from him we have all come, the people whom you have chosen.

55 "All this I have spoken before you, O Lord, because you have said that it was for us that you created this world. 56 As for the other nations that have descended from Adam, you have said that they are nothing, and that they are like spittle, and you have compared their abundance to a drop from a bucket. 57 And now, O Lord, these nations, which are reputed to be as nothing, domineer over us and devour us. 58 But we your people, whom you have called your firstborn, only begotten, zealous for you, and most dear, have been given into their hands. 59 If the world has indeed been created for us, why do we not possess our world as an inheritance? How long will this be so?"

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[2 Esdras 7]
Dispute between Ezra and the angel

1 When I had finished speaking these words, the angel who had been sent to me on the former nights was sent to me again. 2 He said to me, "Rise, Ezra, and listen to the words that I have come to speak to you."

3 I said, "Speak, my lord." And he said to me, "There is a sea set in a wide expanse so that it is deep and vast, 4 but it has an entrance set in a narrow place, so that it is like a river. 5 If there are those who wish to reach the sea, to look at it or to navigate it, how can they come to the broad part unless they pass through the narrow part? 6 Another example: There is a city built and set on a plain, and it is full of all good things; 7 but the entrance to it is narrow and set in a precipitous place, so that there is fire on the right hand and deep water on the left. 8 There is only one path lying between them, that is, between the fire and the water, so that only one person can walk on the path. 9 If now the city is given to someone as an inheritance, how will the heir receive the inheritance unless by passing through the appointed danger?"

10 I said, "That is right, lord." He said to me, "So also is Israel's portion. 11 For I made the world for their sake, and when Adam transgressed my statutes, what had been made was judged. 12 And so the entrances of this world were made narrow and sorrowful and toilsome; they are few and evil, full of dangers and involved in great hardships. 13 But the entrances of the greater world are broad and safe, and yield the fruit of immortality. 14 Therefore unless the living pass through the difficult and futile experiences, they can never receive those things that have been reserved for them. 15 Now therefore why are you disturbed, seeing that you are to perish? Why are you moved, seeing that you are mortal? 16 Why have you not considered in your mind what is to come, rather than what is now present?"

17 Then I answered and said, "O sovereign Lord, you have ordained in your law that the righteous shall inherit these things, but that the ungodly shall perish. 18 The righteous, therefore, can endure difficult circumstances while hoping for easier ones; but those who have done
wickedly have suffered the difficult circumstances and will never see the easier ones."

19 He said to me, "You are not a better judge than the Lord, or wiser than the Most High! 20 Let many perish who are now living, rather than that the law of God that is set before them be disregarded! 21 For the Lord strictly commanded those who came into the world, when they came, what they should do to live, and what they should observe to avoid punishment. 22 Nevertheless they were not obedient, and spoke against him;
   they devised for themselves vain thoughts,
23 and proposed to themselves wicked frauds;
   they even declared that the Most High does not exist,
   and they ignored his ways.
24 They scorned his law,
   and denied his covenants;
   they have been unfaithful to his statutes,
   and have not performed his works.
25 That is the reason, Ezra, that empty things are for the empty, and full things are for the full.

Direct prediction of the future by the angel

26 "For indeed the time will come, when the signs that I have foretold to you will come to pass, that the city that now is not seen shall appear, and the land that now is hidden shall be disclosed. 27 Everyone who has been delivered from the evils that I have foretold shall see my wonders. 28 For my son the Messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him, and those who remain shall rejoice four hundred years. 29 After those years my son the Messiah shall die, and all who draw human breath. 30 Then the world shall be turned back to primeval silence for seven days, as it was at the first beginnings, so that no one shall be left. 31 After seven days the world that is not yet awake shall be roused, and that which is corruptible shall perish. 32 The earth shall give up those who are asleep in it, and the dust those who rest there in silence; and the chambers shall give up the souls that have been committed to them. 33 The Most High shall be revealed on the seat of judgment, and compassion shall pass away, and patience shall be
withdrawn. 34 Only judgment shall remain, truth shall stand, and faithfulness shall grow strong. 35 Recompense shall follow, and the reward shall be manifested; righteous deeds shall awake, and unrighteous deeds shall not sleep. 36 The pit of torment shall appear, and opposite it shall be the place of rest; and the furnace of hell shall be disclosed, and opposite it the paradise of delight. 37 Then the Most High will say to the nations that have been raised from the dead, 'Look now, and understand whom you have denied, whom you have not served, whose commandments you have despised. 38 Look on this side and on that; here are delight and rest, and there are fire and torments.' Thus he will speak to them on the day of judgment — 39 a day that has no sun or moon or stars, 40 or cloud or thunder or lightning, or wind or water or air, or darkness or evening or morning, 41 or summer or spring or heat or winter or frost or cold, or hail or rain or dew, 42 or noon or night, or dawn or shining or brightness or light, but only the splendor of the glory of the Most High, by which all shall see what has been destined. 43 It will last as though for a week of years. 44 This is my judgment and its prescribed order; and to you alone I have shown these things."

The second section of the third vision

45 I answered and said, "O sovereign Lord, I said then and I say now: Blessed are those who are alive and keep your commandments! 46 But what of those for whom I prayed? For who among the living is there that has not sinned, or who is there among mortals that has not transgressed your covenant? 47 And now I see that the world to come will bring delight to few, but torments to many. 48 For an evil heart has grown up in us, which has alienated us from God, and has brought us into corruption and the ways of death, and has shown us the paths of perdition and removed us far from life — and that not merely for a few but for almost all who have been created."

49 He answered me and said, "Listen to me, Ezra, and I will instruct you, and will admonish you once more. 50 For this reason the Most High has made not one world but two. 51 Inasmuch as you have said that the righteous are not many but few, while the ungodly abound, hear the explanation for this.
"If you have just a few precious stones, will you add to them lead and clay?" I said, "Lord, how could that be?" And he said to me, "Not only that, but ask the earth and she will tell you; defer to her, and she will declare it to you. Say to her, 'You produce gold and silver and bronze, and also iron and lead and clay; but silver is more abundant than gold, and bronze than silver, and iron than bronze, and lead than iron, and clay than lead.' Judge therefore which things are precious and desirable, those that are abundant or those that are rare?"

I said, "O sovereign Lord, what is plentiful is of less worth, for what is more rare is more precious."

He answered me and said, "Consider within yourself what you have thought, for the person who has what is hard to get rejoices more than the person who has what is plentiful. So also will be the judgment that I have promised; for I will rejoice over the few who shall be saved, because it is they who have made my glory to prevail now, and through them my name has now been honored. I will not grieve over the great number of those who perish; for it is they who are now like a mist, and are similar to a flame and smoke — they are set on fire and burn hotly, and are extinguished."

I replied and said, "O earth, what have you brought forth, if the mind is made out of the dust like the other created things? For it would have been better if the dust itself had not been born, so that the mind might not have been made from it. But now the mind grows with us, and therefore we are tormented, because we perish and we know it. Let the human race lament, but let the wild animals of the field be glad; let all who have been born lament, but let the cattle and the flocks rejoice. It is much better with them than with us; for they do not look for a judgment, and they do not know of any torment or salvation promised to them after death. What does it profit us that we shall be preserved alive but cruelly tormented? For all who have been born are entangled in iniquities, and are full of sins and burdened with transgressions. And if after death we were not to come into judgment, perhaps it would have been better for us."
70 He answered me and said, "When the Most High made the world and Adam and all who have come from him, he first prepared the judgment and the things that pertain to the judgment. 71 But now, understand from your own words — for you have said that the mind grows with us. 72 For this reason, therefore, those who live on earth shall be tormented, because though they had understanding, they committed iniquity; and though they received the commandments, they did not keep them; and though they obtained the law, they dealt unfaithfully with what they received. 73 What, then, will they have to say in the judgment, or how will they answer in the last times? 74 How long the Most High has been patient with those who inhabit the world! — and not for their sake, but because of the times that he has foreordained."

Dialogic prediction of the future

75 I answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, show this also to your servant: whether after death, as soon as everyone of us yields up the soul, we shall be kept in rest until those times come when you will renew the creation, or whether we shall be tormented at once?"

76 He answered me and said, "I will show you that also, but do not include yourself with those who have shown scorn, or number yourself among those who are tormented. 77 For you have a treasure of works stored up with the Most High, but it will not be shown to you until the last times. 78 Now concerning death, the teaching is: When the decisive decree has gone out from the Most High that a person shall die, as the spirit leaves the body to return again to him who gave it, first of all it adores the glory of the Most High. 79 If it is one of those who have shown scorn and have not kept the way of the Most High, who have despised his law and hated those who fear God — 80 such spirits shall not enter into habitations, but shall immediately wander about in torments, always grieving and sad, in seven ways. 81 The first way, because they have scorched the law of the Most High. 82 The second way, because they cannot now make a good repentance so that they may live. 83 The third way, they shall see the reward laid up for those who have trusted the covenants of the Most High. 84 The fourth way,
they shall consider the torment laid up for themselves in the last days. 85 The fifth way, they shall see how the habitations of the others are guarded by angels in profound quiet. 86 The sixth way, they shall see how some of them will cross over into torments. 87 The seventh way, which is worse than all the ways that have been mentioned, because they shall utterly waste away in confusion and be consumed with shame, and shall wither with fear at seeing the glory of the Most High in whose presence they sinned while they were alive, and in whose presence they are to be judged in the last times.

88 "Now this is the order of those who have kept the ways of the Most High, when they shall be separated from their mortal body. 89 During the time that they lived in it, they laboriously served the Most High, and withstood danger every hour so that they might keep the law of the Lawgiver perfectly. 90 Therefore this is the teaching concerning them: 91 First of all, they shall see with great joy the glory of him who receives them, for they shall have rest in seven orders. 92 The first order, because they have striven with great effort to overcome the evil thought that was formed with them, so that it might not lead them astray from life into death. 93 The second order, because they see the perplexity in which the souls of the ungodly wander and the punishment that awaits them. 94 The third order, they see the witness that he who formed them bears concerning them, that throughout their life they kept the law with which they were entrusted. 95 The fourth order, they understand the rest that they now enjoy, being gathered into their chambers and guarded by angels in profound quiet, and the glory waiting for them in the last days. 96 The fifth order, they rejoice that they have now escaped what is corruptible and shall inherit what is to come; and besides they see the straits and toil from which they have been delivered, and the spacious liberty that they are to receive and enjoy in immortality. 97 The sixth order, when it is shown them how their face is to shine like the sun, and how they are to be made like the light of the stars, being incorruptible from then on. 98 The seventh order, which is greater than all that have been mentioned, because they shall rejoice with boldness, and shall be confident without confusion, and shall be glad without fear, for they press forward to see the face of him whom they served in life and from whom they are to receive their reward when glorified. 99 This is the
order of the souls of the righteous, as henceforth is announced; and the previously mentioned are the ways of torment that those who would not give heed shall suffer hereafter."

100 Then I answered and said, "Will time therefore be given to the souls, after they have been separated from the bodies, to see what you have described to me?"

101 He said to me, "They shall have freedom for seven days, so that during these seven days they may see the things of which you have been told, and afterwards they shall be gathered in their habitations."

Dispute between Ezra and the angel

102 I answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, show further to me, your servant, whether on the day of judgment the righteous will be able to intercede for the ungodly or to entreat the Most High for them — 103 fathers for sons or sons for parents, brothers for brothers, relatives for their kindred, or friends for those who are most dear."

104 He answered me and said, "Since you have found favor in my sight, I will show you this also. The day of judgment is decisive and displays to all the seal of truth. Just as now a father does not send his son, or a son his father, or a master his servant, or a friend his dearest friend, to be ill or sleep or eat or be healed in his place, 105 so no one shall ever pray for another on that day, neither shall anyone lay a burden on another; for then all shall bear their own righteousness and unrighteousness."

[NOTE: At v. 106 we come to the continuation of ch 7 as preserved in the standard editions of the Latin Vulgate; NRSV resumes the Latin numbering here, designating verses 106-140 as 36-70, but with the numbers 106-140 added as well.]

36 106 I answered and said, "How then do we find that first Abraham prayed for the people of Sodom, and Moses for our ancestors who sinned in the desert, 37 107 and Joshua after him for Israel in the days of Achan, 38 108 and Samuel in the days of Saul, and David for the
plague, and Solomon for those at the dedication, 39 109 and Elijah for those who received the rain, and for the one who was dead, that he might live, 40 110 and Hezekiah for the people in the days of Sennacherib, and many others prayed for many? 41 111 So if now, when corruption has increased and unrighteousness has multiplied, the righteous have prayed for the ungodly, why will it not be so then as well?"

42 112 He answered me and said, "This present world is not the end; the full glory does not remain in it; therefore those who were strong prayed for the weak. 43 113 But the day of judgment will be the end of this age and the beginning of the immortal age to come, in which corruption has passed away, 44 114 sinful indulgence has come to an end, unbelief has been cut off, and righteousness has increased and truth has appeared. 45 115 Therefore no one will then be able to have mercy on someone who has been condemned in the judgment, or to harm someone who is victorious."

46 116 I answered and said, "This is my first and last comment: it would have been better if the earth had not produced Adam, or else, when it had produced him, had restrained him from sinning. 47 117 For what good is it to all that they live in sorrow now and expect punishment after death? 48 118 O Adam, what have you done? For though it was you who sinned, the fall was not yours alone, but ours also who are your descendants. 49 119 For what good is it to us, if an immortal time has been promised to us, but we have done deeds that bring death? 50 120 And what good is it that an everlasting hope has been promised to us, but we have miserably failed? 51 121 Or that safe and healthful habitations have been reserved for us, but we have lived wickedly? 52 122 Or that the glory of the Most High will defend those who have led a pure life, but we have walked in the most wicked ways? 53 123 Or that a paradise shall be revealed, whose fruit remains unspoiled and in which are abundance and healing, but we shall not enter it 54 124 because we have lived in perverse ways? 55 125 Or that the faces of those who practiced self-control shall shine more than the stars, but our faces shall be blacker than darkness? 56 126 For while we lived and committed iniquity we did not consider what we should suffer after death."
57 127 He answered and said, "This is the significance of the contest that all who are born on earth shall wage: 58 128 if they are defeated they shall suffer what you have said, but if they are victorious they shall receive what I have said. 59 129 For this is the way of which Moses, while he was alive, spoke to the people, saying, 'Choose life for yourself, so that you may live!' 60 130 But they did not believe him or the prophets after him, or even myself who have spoken to them. 61 131 Therefore there shall not be grief at their destruction, so much as joy over those to whom salvation is assured."

62 132 I answered and said, "I know, O Lord, that the Most High is now called merciful, because he has mercy on those who have not yet come into the world; 63 133 and gracious, because he is gracious to those who turn in repentance to his law; 64 134 and patient, because he shows patience toward those who have sinned, since they are his own creatures; 65 135 and bountiful, because he would rather give than take away; 66 136 and abundant in compassion, because he makes his compassions abound more and more to those now living and to those who are gone and to those yet to come — 67 137 for if he did not make them abound, the world with those who inhabit it would not have life — 68 138 and he is called the giver, because if he did not give out of his goodness so that those who have committed iniquities might be relieved of them, not one ten-thousandth of humankind could have life; 69 139 and the judge, because if he did not pardon those who were created by his word and blot out the multitude of their sins, 70 140 there would probably be left only very few of the innumerable multitude."

[2 Esdras 8]

1 He answered me and said, "The Most High made this world for the sake of many, but the world to come for the sake of only a few. 2 But I tell you a parable, Ezra. Just as, when you ask the earth, it will tell you that it provides a large amount of clay from which earthenware is made, but only a little dust from which gold comes, so is the course of the present world. 3 Many have been created, but only a few shall be saved."
The third section of the third vision; Monologue of Ezra

4 I answered and said, "Then drink your fill of understanding, O my soul, and drink wisdom, O my heart. 5 For not of your own will did you come into the world, and against your will you depart, for you have been given only a short time to live. 6 O Lord above us, grant to your servant that we may pray before you, and give us a seed for our heart and cultivation of our understanding so that fruit may be produced, by which every mortal who bears the likeness of a human being may be able to live. 7 For you alone exist, and we are a work of your hands, as you have declared. 8 And because you give life to the body that is now fashioned in the womb, and furnish it with members, what you have created is preserved amid fire and water, and for nine months the womb endures your creature that has been created in it. 9 But that which keeps and that which is kept shall both be kept by your keeping. And when the womb gives up again what has been created in it, 10 you have commanded that from the members themselves (that is, from the breasts) milk, the fruit of the breasts, should be supplied, 11 so that what has been fashioned may be nourished for a time; and afterwards you will still guide it in your mercy. 12 You have nurtured it in your righteousness, and instructed it in your law, and reproved it in your wisdom. 13 You put it to death as your creation, and make it live as your work. 14 If then you will suddenly and quickly destroy what with so great labor was fashioned by your command, to what purpose was it made? 15 And now I will speak out: About all humankind you know best; but I will speak about your people, for whom I am grieved, 16 and about your inheritance, for whom I lament, and about Israel, for whom I am sad, and about the seed of Jacob, for whom I am troubled. 17 Therefore I will pray before you for myself and for them, for I see the failings of us who inhabit the earth; 18 and now also I have heard of the swiftness of the judgment that is to come. 19 Therefore hear my voice and understand my words, and I will speak before you."

Ezra's Prayer

The beginning of the words of Ezra's prayer, before he was taken up. He said: 20 "O Lord, you who inhabit eternity, whose eyes are exalted and whose upper chambers are in the air, 21 whose throne is beyond
measure and whose glory is beyond comprehension, before whom the hosts of angels stand trembling 22 and at whose command they are changed to wind and fire, whose word is sure and whose utterances are certain, whose command is strong and whose ordinance is terrible, 23 whose look dries up the depths and whose indignation makes the mountains melt away, and whose truth is established forever — 24 hear, O Lord, the prayer of your servant, and give ear to the petition of your creature; attend to my words. 25 For as long as I live I will speak, and as long as I have understanding I will answer. 26 O do not look on the sins of your people, but on those who serve you in truth. 27 Do not take note of the endeavors of those who act wickedly, but of the endeavors of those who have kept your covenants amid afflictions. 28 Do not think of those who have lived wickedly in your sight, but remember those who have willingly acknowledged that you are to be feared. 29 Do not will the destruction of those who have the ways of cattle, but regard those who have gloriously taught your law. 30 Do not be angry with those who are deemed worse than wild animals, but love those who have always put their trust in your glory. 31 For we and our ancestors have passed our lives in ways that bring death; but it is because of us sinners that you are called merciful. 32 For if you have desired to have pity on us, who have no works of righteousness, then you will be called merciful. 33 For the righteous, who have many works laid up with you, shall receive their reward in consequence of their own deeds. 34 But what are mortals, that you are angry with them; or what is a corruptible race, that you are so bitter against it? 35 For in truth there is no one among those who have been born who has not acted wickedly; among those who have existed there is no one who has not done wrong. 36 For in this, O Lord, your righteousness and goodness will be declared, when you are merciful to those who have no store of good works."

Dispute between Ezra and the angel

37 He answered me and said, "Some things you have spoken rightly, and it will turn out according to your words. 38 For indeed I will not concern myself about the fashioning of those who have sinned, or about their death, their judgment, or their destruction; 39 but I will rejoice over the creation of the righteous, over their pilgrimage also,
and their salvation, and their receiving their reward. 40 As I have spoken, therefore, so it shall be.

41 "For just as the farmer sows many seeds in the ground and plants a multitude of seedlings, and yet not all that have been sown will come up in due season, and not all that were planted will take root; so also those who have been sown in the world will not all be saved."

42 I answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, let me speak. 43 If the farmer's seed does not come up, because it has not received your rain in due season, or if it has been ruined by too much rain, it perishes. 44 But people, who have been formed by your hands and are called your own image because they are made like you, and for whose sake you have formed all things — have you also made them like the farmer's seed? 45 Surely not, O Lord above! But spare your people and have mercy on your inheritance, for you have mercy on your own creation."

46 He answered me and said, "Things that are present are for those who live now, and things that are future are for those who will live hereafter. 47 For you come far short of being able to love my creation more than I love it. But you have often compared yourself to the unrighteous. Never do so! 48 But even in this respect you will be praiseworthy before the Most High, 49 because you have humbled yourself, as is becoming for you, and have not considered yourself to be among the righteous. You will receive the greatest glory, 50 for many miseries will affect those who inhabit the world in the last times, because they have walked in great pride. 51 But think of your own case, and inquire concerning the glory of those who are like yourself, 52 because it is for you that paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted, the age to come is prepared, plenty is provided, a city is built, rest is appointed, goodness is established and wisdom perfected beforehand. 53 The root of evil is sealed up from you, illness is banished from you, and death is hidden; Hades has fled and corruption has been forgotten; 54 sorrows have passed away, and in the end the treasure of immortality is made manifest. 55 Therefore do not ask any more questions about the great number of those who perish. 56 For when they had opportunity to choose, they despised the Most High,
and were contemptuous of his law, and abandoned his ways. 57 Moreover, they have even trampled on his righteous ones, 58 and said in their hearts that there is no God — though they knew well that they must die. 59 For just as the things that I have predicted await you, so the thirst and torment that are prepared await them. For the Most High did not intend that anyone should be destroyed; 60 but those who were created have themselves defiled the name of him who made them, and have been ungrateful to him who prepared life for them now. 61 Therefore my judgment is now drawing near; 62 I have not shown this to all people, but only to you and a few like you." 

Direct prediction of the future by the angel

Then I answered and said, 63 "O Lord, you have already shown me a great number of the signs that you will do in the last times, but you have not shown me when you will do them."

[2 Esdras 9]

1 He answered me and said, "Measure carefully in your mind, and when you see that some of the predicted signs have occurred, 2 then you will know that it is the very time when the Most High is about to visit the world that he has made. 3 So when there shall appear in the world earthquakes, tumult of peoples, intrigues of nations, wavering of leaders, confusion of princes, 4 then you will know that it was of these that the Most High spoke from the days that were of old, from the beginning. 5 For just as with everything that has occurred in the world, the beginning is evident, and the end manifest; 6 so also are the times of the Most High: the beginnings are manifest in wonders and mighty works, and the end in penalties and in signs.

7 "It shall be that all who will be saved and will be able to escape on account of their works, or on account of the faith by which they have believed, 8 will survive the dangers that have been predicted, and will see my salvation in my land and within my borders, which I have sanctified for myself from the beginning. 9 Then those who have now abused my ways shall be amazed, and those who have rejected them with contempt shall live in torments. 10 For as many as did not
acknowledge me in their lifetime, though they received my benefits, 11 and as many as scorned my law while they still had freedom, and did not understand but despised it while an opportunity of repentance was still open to them, 12 these must in torment acknowledge it after death. 13 Therefore, do not continue to be curious about how the ungodly will be punished; but inquire how the righteous will be saved, those to whom the age belongs and for whose sake the age was made."

14 I answered and said, 15 "I said before, and I say now, and will say it again: there are more who perish than those who will be saved, 16 as a wave is greater than a drop of water."

17 He answered me and said, "As is the field, so is the seed; and as are the flowers, so are the colors; and as is the work, so is the product; and as is the farmer, so is the threshing floor. 18 For there was a time in this age when I was preparing for those who now exist, before the world was made for them to live in, and no one opposed me then, for no one existed; 19 but now those who have been created in this world, which is supplied both with an unfailing table and an inexhaustible pasture, have become corrupt in their ways. 20 So I considered my world, and saw that it was lost. I saw that my earth was in peril because of the devices of those who had come into it. 21 And I saw and spared some with great difficulty, and saved for myself one grape out of a cluster, and one plant out of a great forest. 22 So let the multitude perish that has been born in vain, but let my grape and my plant be saved, because with much labor I have perfected them.

Conclusion and injunctions

23 "Now, if you will let seven days more pass — do not, however, fast during them, 24 but go into a field of flowers where no house has been built, and eat only of the flowers of the field, and taste no meat and drink no wine, but eat only flowers — 25 and pray to the Most High continually, then I will come and talk with you."
The fourth vision; Introduction

26 So I went, as he directed me, into the field that is called Ardat; there I sat among the flowers and ate of the plants of the field, and the nourishment they afforded satisfied me. 27 After seven days, while I lay on the grass, my heart was troubled again as it was before. 28 Then my mouth was opened, and I began to speak before the Most High, and said,

Ezra's address

29 "O Lord, you showed yourself among us, to our ancestors in the wilderness when they came out from Egypt and when they came into the untrodden and unfruitful wilderness; 30 and you said, 'Hear me, O Israel, and give heed to my words, O descendants of Jacob. 31 For I sow my law in you, and it shall bring forth fruit in you, and you shall be glorified through it forever.' 32 But though our ancestors received the law, they did not keep it and did not observe the statutes; yet the fruit of the law did not perish — for it could not, because it was yours. 33 Yet those who received it perished, because they did not keep what had been sown in them. 34 Now this is the general rule that, when the ground has received seed, or the sea a ship, or any dish food or drink, and when it comes about that what was sown or what was launched or what was put in is destroyed, 35 they are destroyed, but the things that held them remain; yet with us it has not been so. 36 For we who have received the law and sinned will perish, as well as our hearts that received it; 37 the law, however, does not perish but survives in its glory."

The first part of the vision

38 When I said these things in my heart, I looked around, and on my right I saw a woman; she was mourning and weeping with a loud voice, and was deeply grieved at heart; her clothes were torn, and there were ashes on her head. 39 Then I dismissed the thoughts with which I had been engaged, and turned to her 40 and said to her, "Why are you weeping, and why are you grieved at heart?"
41 She said to me, "Let me alone, my lord, so that I may weep for myself and continue to mourn, for I am greatly embittered in spirit and deeply distressed."

42 I said to her, "What has happened to you? Tell me."

43 And she said to me, "Your servant was barren and had no child, though I lived with my husband for thirty years. 44 Every hour and every day during those thirty years I prayed to the Most High, night and day. 45 And after thirty years God heard your servant, and looked upon my low estate, and considered my distress, and gave me a son. I rejoiced greatly over him, I and my husband and all my neighbors; and we gave great glory to the Mighty One. 46 And I brought him up with much care. 47 So when he grew up and I came to take a wife for him, I set a day for the marriage feast.

[2 Esdras 10]

1 "But it happened that when my son entered his wedding chamber, he fell down and died. 2 So all of us put out our lamps, and all my neighbors attempted to console me; I remained quiet until the evening of the second day. 3 But when all of them had stopped consoling me, encouraging me to be quiet, I got up in the night and fled, and I came to this field, as you see. 4 And now I intend not to return to the town, but to stay here; I will neither eat nor drink, but will mourn and fast continually until I die."

The second part of the vision

5 Then I broke off the reflections with which I was still engaged, and answered her in anger and said, 6 "You most foolish of women, do you not see our mourning, and what has happened to us? 7 For Zion, the mother of us all, is in deep grief and great distress. 8 It is most appropriate to mourn now, because we are all mourning, and to be sorrowful, because we are all sorrowing; you are sorrowing for one son, but we, the whole world, for our mother. 9 Now ask the earth, and she will tell you that it is she who ought to mourn over so many who have come into being upon her. 10 From the beginning all have
been born of her, and others will come; and, lo, almost all go to perdition, and a multitude of them will come to doom. 11 Who then ought to mourn the more, she who lost so great a multitude, or you who are grieving for one alone? 12 But if you say to me, 'My lamentation is not like the earth's, for I have lost the fruit of my womb, which I brought forth in pain and bore in sorrow; 13 but it is with the earth according to the way of the earth — the multitude that is now in it goes as it came'; 14 then I say to you, 'Just as you brought forth in sorrow, so the earth also has from the beginning given her fruit, that is, humankind, to him who made her.' 15 Now, therefore, keep your sorrow to yourself, and bear bravely the troubles that have come upon you. 16 For if you acknowledge the decree of God to be just, you will receive your son back in due time, and will be praised among women. 17 Therefore go into the town to your husband.'

18 She said to me, "I will not do so; I will not go into the city, but I will die here."

19 So I spoke again to her, and said, 20 "Do not do that, but let yourself be persuaded — for how many are the adversities of Zion? — and be consoled because of the sorrow of Jerusalem. 21 For you see how our sanctuary has been laid waste, our altar thrown down, our temple destroyed; 22 our harp has been laid low, our song has been silenced, and our rejoicing has been ended; the light of our lampstand has been put out, the ark of our covenant has been plundered, our holy things have been polluted, and the name by which we are called has been almost profaned; our children have suffered abuse, our priests have been burned to death, our Levites have gone into exile, our virgins have been defiled, and our wives have been ravished; our righteous men have been carried off, our little ones have been cast out, our young men have been enslaved and our strong men made powerless. 23 And, worst of all, the seal of Zion has been deprived of its glory, and given over into the hands of those that hate us. 24 Therefore shake off your great sadness and lay aside your many sorrows, so that the Mighty One may be merciful to you again, and the Most High may give you rest, a respite from your troubles."
A vision of the transformed Jerusalem

25 While I was talking to her, her face suddenly began to shine exceedingly; her countenance flashed like lightning, so that I was too frightened to approach her, and my heart was terrified. While I was wondering what this meant, 26 she suddenly uttered a loud and fearful cry, so that the earth shook at the sound. 27 When I looked up, the woman was no longer visible to me, but a city was being built, and a place of huge foundations showed itself.

The appearance of the angel

I was afraid, and cried with a loud voice and said, 28 "Where is the angel Uriel, who came to me at first? For it was he who brought me into this overpowering bewilderment; my end has become corruption, and my prayer a reproach."

29 While I was speaking these words, the angel who had come to me at first came to me, and when he saw me 30 lying there like a corpse, deprived of my understanding, he grasped my right hand and strengthened me and set me on my feet, and said to me, 31 "What is the matter with you? And why are you troubled? And why are your understanding and the thoughts of your mind troubled?"

32 I said, "It was because you abandoned me. I did as you directed, and went out into the field, and lo, what I have seen and can still see, I am unable to explain."

33 He said to me, "Stand up like a man, and I will instruct you."

34 I said, "Speak, my lord; only do not forsake me, so that I may not die before my time. 35 For I have seen what I did not know, and I hear what I do not understand 36 — or is my mind deceived, and my soul dreaming? 37 Now therefore I beg you to give your servant an explanation of this bewildering vision."
Interpretation of the vision

38 He answered me and said, "Listen to me, and I will teach you, and tell you about the things that you fear; for the Most High has revealed many secrets to you. 39 He has seen your righteous conduct, and that you have sorrowed continually for your people and mourned greatly over Zion. 40 This therefore is the meaning of the vision. 41 The woman who appeared to you a little while ago, whom you saw mourning and whom you began to console 42 (you do not now see the form of a woman, but there appeared to you a city being built) 43 and who told you about the misfortune of her son — this is the interpretation: 44 The woman whom you saw is Zion, which you now behold as a city being built. 45 And as for her telling you that she was barren for thirty years, the reason is that there were three thousand years in the world before any offering was offered in it. 46 And after three thousand years Solomon built the city, and offered offerings; then it was that the barren woman bore a son. 47 And as for her telling you that she brought him up with much care, that was the period of residence in Jerusalem. 48 And as for her saying to you, 'My son died as he entered his wedding chamber,' and that misfortune had overtaken her, this was the destruction that befell Jerusalem. 49 So you saw her likeness, how she mourned for her son, and you began to console her for what had happened. 50 For now the Most High, seeing that you are sincerely grieved and profoundly distressed for her, has shown you the brilliance of her glory, and the loveliness of her beauty. 51 Therefore I told you to remain in the field where no house had been built, 52 for I knew that the Most High would reveal these things to you. 53 Therefore I told you to go into the field where there was no foundation of any building, 54 because no work of human construction could endure in a place where the city of the Most High was to be revealed.

Conclusion and injunctions

55 "Therefore do not be afraid, and do not let your heart be terrified; but go in and see the splendor or the vastness of the building, as far as it is possible for your eyes to see it, 56 and afterward you will hear as much as your ears can hear. 57 For you are more blessed than many,
and you have been called to be with the Most High as few have been.
58 But tomorrow night you shall remain here, 59 and the Most High
will show you in those dream visions what the Most High will do to
those who inhabit the earth in the last days."

So I slept that night and the following one, as he had told me.

[2 Esdras 11]
The fifth vision; description of the vision

1 On the second night I had a dream: I saw rising from the sea an eagle
that had twelve feathered wings and three heads. 2 I saw it spread its
wings over the whole earth, and all the winds of heaven blew upon it,
and the clouds were gathered around it. 3 I saw that out of its wings
there grew opposing wings; but they became little, puny wings. 4 But
its heads were at rest; the middle head was larger than the other
heads, but it too was at rest with them. 5 Then I saw that the eagle
flew with its wings, and it reigned over the earth and over those who
inhabit it. 6 And I saw how all things under heaven were subjected to
it, and no one spoke against it — not a single creature that was on the
earth. 7 Then I saw the eagle rise upon its talons, and it uttered a cry to
its wings, saying, 8 "Do not all watch at the same time; let each sleep
in its own place, and watch in its turn; 9 but let the heads be reserved
for the last."

10 I looked again and saw that the voice did not come from its heads,
but from the middle of its body. 11 I counted its rival wings, and there
were eight of them. 12 As I watched, one wing on the right side rose
up, and it reigned over all the earth. 13 And after a time its reign came
to an end, and it disappeared, so that even its place was no longer
visible. Then the next wing rose up and reigned, and it continued to
reign a long time. 14 While it was reigning its end came also, so that it
disappeared like the first. 15 And a voice sounded, saying to it, 16 "Listen to me, you who have ruled the earth all this time; I announce
this to you before you disappear. 17 After you no one shall rule as long
as you have ruled, not even half as long."
18 Then the third wing raised itself up, and held the rule as the earlier ones had done, and it also disappeared. 19 And so it went with all the wings; they wielded power one after another and then were never seen again. 20 I kept looking, and in due time the wings that followed also rose up on the right side, in order to rule. There were some of them that ruled, yet disappeared suddenly; 21 and others of them rose up, but did not hold the rule.

22 And after this I looked and saw that the twelve wings and the two little wings had disappeared, 23 and nothing remained on the eagle's body except the three heads that were at rest and six little wings.

24 As I kept looking I saw that two little wings separated from the six and remained under the head that was on the right side; but four remained in their place. 25 Then I saw that these little wings planned to set themselves up and hold the rule. 26 As I kept looking, one was set up, but suddenly disappeared; 27 a second also, and this disappeared more quickly than the first. 28 While I continued to look the two that remained were planning between themselves to reign together; 29 and while they were planning, one of the heads that were at rest (the one that was in the middle) suddenly awoke; it was greater than the other two heads. 30 And I saw how it allied the two heads with itself, 31 and how the head turned with those that were with it and devoured the two little wings that were planning to reign. 32 Moreover this head gained control of the whole earth, and with much oppression dominated its inhabitants; it had greater power over the world than all the wings that had gone before.

33 After this I looked again and saw the head in the middle suddenly disappear, just as the wings had done. 34 But the two heads remained, which also in like manner ruled over the earth and its inhabitants. 35 And while I looked, I saw the head on the right side devour the one on the left.

36 Then I heard a voice saying to me, "Look in front of you and consider what you see." 37 When I looked, I saw what seemed to be a lion roused from the forest, roaring; and I heard how it uttered a human voice to the eagle, and spoke, saying, 38 "Listen and I will
speak to you. The Most High says to you, 39 'Are you not the one that remains of the four beasts that I had made to reign in my world, so that the end of my times might come through them? 40 You, the fourth that has come, have conquered all the beasts that have gone before; and you have held sway over the world with great terror, and over all the earth with grievous oppression; and for so long you have lived on the earth with deceit. 41 You have judged the earth, but not with truth, 42 for you have oppressed the meek and injured the peaceable; you have hated those who tell the truth, and have loved liars; you have destroyed the homes of those who brought forth fruit, and have laid low the walls of those who did you no harm. 43 Your insolence has come up before the Most High, and your pride to the Mighty One. 44 The Most High has looked at his times; now they have ended, and his ages have reached completion. 45 Therefore you, eagle, will surely disappear, you and your terrifying wings, your most evil little wings, your malicious heads, your most evil talons, and your whole worthless body, 46 so that the whole earth, freed from your violence, may be refreshed and relieved, and may hope for the judgment and mercy of him who made it.'"

[2 Esdras 12]

1 While the lion was saying these words to the eagle, I looked 2 and saw that the remaining head had disappeared. The two wings that had gone over to it rose up and set themselves up to reign, and their reign was brief and full of tumult. 3 When I looked again, they were already vanishing. The whole body of the eagle was burned, and the earth was exceedingly terrified.

The seer's response

Then I woke up in great perplexity of mind and great fear, and I said to my spirit, 4 "You have brought this upon me, because you search out the ways of the Most High. 5 I am still weary in mind and very weak in my spirit, and not even a little strength is left in me, because of the great fear with which I have been terrified tonight. 6 Therefore I will now entreat the Most High that he may strengthen me to the end."
7 Then I said, "O sovereign Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, and if I have been accounted righteous before you beyond many others, and if my prayer has indeed come up before your face, 8 strengthen me and show me, your servant, the interpretation and meaning of this terrifying vision so that you may fully comfort my soul. 9 For you have judged me worthy to be shown the end of the times and the last events of the times."

The interpretation

10 He said to me, "This is the interpretation of this vision that you have seen: 11 The eagle that you saw coming up from the sea is the fourth kingdom that appeared in a vision to your brother Daniel. 12 But it was not explained to him as I now explain to you or have explained it. 13 The days are coming when a kingdom shall rise on earth, and it shall be more terrifying than all the kingdoms that have been before it. 14 And twelve kings shall reign in it, one after another. 15 But the second that is to reign shall hold sway for a longer time than any other one of the twelve. 16 This is the interpretation of the twelve wings that you saw.

17 "As for your hearing a voice that spoke, coming not from the eagle's heads but from the midst of its body, this is the interpretation: 18 In the midst of the time of that kingdom great struggles shall arise, and it shall be in danger of falling; nevertheless it shall not fall then, but shall regain its former power. 19 As for your seeing eight little wings clinging to its wings, this is the interpretation: 20 Eight kings shall arise in it, whose times shall be short and their years swift; 21 two of them shall perish when the middle of its time draws near; and four shall be kept for the time when its end approaches, but two shall be kept until the end.

22 "As for your seeing three heads at rest, this is the interpretation: 23 In its last days the Most High will raise up three kings, and they shall renew many things in it, and shall rule the earth 24 and its inhabitants more oppressively than all who were before them. Therefore they are called the heads of the eagle, 25 because it is they who shall sum up his wickedness and perform his last actions. 26 As for your seeing that the large head disappeared, one of the kings shall die in his bed, but in
agonies. 27 But as for the two who remained, the sword shall devour them. 28 For the sword of one shall devour him who was with him; but he also shall fall by the sword in the last days.

29 "As for your seeing two little wings passing over to the head which was on the right side, 30 this is the interpretation: It is these whom the Most High has kept for the eagle's end; this was the reign which was brief and full of tumult, as you have seen.

31 "And as for the lion whom you saw rousing up out of the forest and roaring and speaking to the eagle and reproving him for his unrighteousness, and as for all his words that you have heard, 32 this is the Messiah whom the Most High has kept until the end of days, who will arise from the offspring of David, and will come and speak with them. He will denounce them for their ungodliness and for their wickedness, and will display before them their contemptuous dealings. 33 For first he will bring them alive before his judgment seat, and when he has reproved them, then he will destroy them. 34 But in mercy he will set free the remnant of my people, those who have been saved throughout my borders, and he will make them joyful until the end comes, the day of judgment, of which I spoke to you at the beginning. 35 This is the dream that you saw, and this is its interpretation. 36 And you alone were worthy to learn this secret of the Most High.

Conclusion and injunctions

37 Therefore write all these things that you have seen in a book, put it in a hidden place; 38 and you shall teach them to the wise among your people, whose hearts you know are able to comprehend and keep these secrets. 39 But as for you, wait here seven days more, so that you may be shown whatever it pleases the Most High to show you." Then he left me.

The seer comforts those who were grieved because of his absence

40 When all the people heard that the seven days were past and I had not returned to the city, they all gathered together, from the least to the greatest, and came to me and spoke to me, saying, 41 "How have
we offended you, and what harm have we done you, that you have forsaken us and sit in this place? 42 For of all the prophets you alone are left to us, like a cluster of grapes from the vintage, and like a lamp in a dark place, and like a haven for a ship saved from a storm. 43 Are not the disasters that have befallen us enough? 44 Therefore if you forsake us, how much better it would have been for us if we also had been consumed in the burning of Zion. 45 For we are no better than those who died there." And they wept with a loud voice.

Then I answered them and said, 46 "Take courage, O Israel; and do not be sorrowful, O house of Jacob; 47 for the Most High has you in remembrance, and the Mighty One has not forgotten you in your struggle. 48 As for me, I have neither forsaken you nor withdrawn from you; but I have come to this place to pray on account of the desolation of Zion, and to seek mercy on account of the humiliation of our sanctuary. 49 Now go to your homes, every one of you, and after these days I will come to you." 50 So the people went into the city, as I told them to do. 51 But I sat in the field seven days, as the angel had commanded me; and I ate only of the flowers of the field, and my food was of plants during those days.

[2 Esdras 13]  
The sixth vision; description of the vision

1 After seven days I dreamed a dream in the night. 2 And lo, a wind arose from the sea and stirred up all its waves. 3 As I kept looking the wind made something like the figure of a man come up out of the heart of the sea. And I saw that this man flew with the clouds of heaven; and wherever he turned his face to look, everything under his gaze trembled, 4 and whenever his voice issued from his mouth, all who heard his voice melted as wax melts when it feels the fire.

5 After this I looked and saw that an innumerable multitude of people were gathered together from the four winds of heaven to make war against the man who came up out of the sea. 6 And I looked and saw that he carved out for himself a great mountain, and flew up on to it. 7 And I tried to see the region or place from which the mountain was carved, but I could not.
8 After this I looked and saw that all who had gathered together against him, to wage war with him, were filled with fear, and yet they dared to fight. 9 When he saw the onrush of the approaching multitude, he neither lifted his hand nor held a spear or any weapon of war; 10 but I saw only how he sent forth from his mouth something like a stream of fire, and from his lips a flaming breath, and from his tongue he shot forth a storm of sparks. 11 All these were mingled together, the stream of fire and the flaming breath and the great storm, and fell on the onrushing multitude that was prepared to fight, and burned up all of them, so that suddenly nothing was seen of the innumerable multitude but only the dust of ashes and the smell of smoke. When I saw it, I was amazed.

12 After this I saw the same man come down from the mountain and call to himself another multitude that was peaceable. 13 Then many people came to him, some of whom were joyful and some sorrowful; some of them were bound, and some were bringing others as offerings.

The seer prays that God will interpret the vision to him

Then I woke up in great terror, and prayed to the Most High, and said, 14 "From the beginning you have shown your servant these wonders, and have deemed me worthy to have my prayer heard by you; 15 now show me the interpretation of this dream also. 16 For as I consider it in my mind, alas for those who will be left in those days! And still more, alas for those who are not left! 17 For those who are not left will be sad 18 because they understand the things that are reserved for the last days, but cannot attain them. 19 But alas for those also who are left, and for that very reason! For they shall see great dangers and much distress, as these dreams show. 20 Yet it is better to come into these things, though incurring peril, than to pass from the world like a cloud, and not to see what will happen in the last days."
The interpretation

He answered me and said, 21 "I will tell you the interpretation of the vision, and I will also explain to you the things that you have mentioned. 22 As for what you said about those who survive, and concerning those who do not survive, this is the interpretation: 23 The one who brings the peril at that time will protect those who fall into peril, who have works and faith toward the Almighty. 24 Understand therefore that those who are left are more blessed than those who have died.

25 "This is the interpretation of the vision: As for your seeing a man come up from the heart of the sea, 26 this is he whom the Most High has been keeping for many ages, who will himself deliver his creation; and he will direct those who are left. 27 And as for your seeing wind and fire and a storm coming out of his mouth, 28 and as for his not holding a spear or weapon of war, yet destroying the onrushing multitude that came to conquer him, this is the interpretation: 29 The days are coming when the Most High will deliver those who are on the earth. 30 And bewilderment of mind shall come over those who inhabit the earth. 31 They shall plan to make war against one another, city against city, place against place, people against people, and kingdom against kingdom. 32 When these things take place and the signs occur that I showed you before, then my Son will be revealed, whom you saw as a man coming up from the sea.

33 "Then, when all the nations hear his voice, all the nations shall leave their own lands and the warfare that they have against one another; 34 and an innumerable multitude shall be gathered together, as you saw, wishing to come and conquer him. 35 But he shall stand on the top of Mount Zion. 36 And Zion shall come and be made manifest to all people, prepared and built, as you saw the mountain carved out without hands. 37 Then he, my Son, will reprove the assembled nations for their ungodliness (this was symbolized by the storm), 38 and will reproach them to their face with their evil thoughts and the torments with which they are to be tortured (which were symbolized by the flames), and will destroy them without effort by means of the law (which was symbolized by the fire).
39 "And as for your seeing him gather to himself another multitude that was peaceable, 40 these are the nine tribes that were taken away from their own land into exile in the days of King Hoshea, whom Shalmaneser, king of the Assyrians, made captives; he took them across the river, and they were taken into another land. 41 But they formed this plan for themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the nations and go to a more distant region, where no human beings had ever lived, 42 so that there at least they might keep their statutes that they had not kept in their own land. 43 And they went in by the narrow passages of the Euphrates river. 44 For at that time the Most High performed signs for them, and stopped the channels of the river until they had crossed over. 45 Through that region there was a long way to go, a journey of a year and a half; and that country is called Arzareth.

46 "Then they lived there until the last times; and now, when they are about to come again, 47 the Most High will stop the channels of the river again, so that they may be able to cross over. Therefore you saw the multitude gathered together in peace. 48 But those who are left of your people, who are found within my holy borders, shall be saved. 49 Therefore when he destroys the multitude of the nations that are gathered together, he will defend the people who remain. 50 And then he will show them very many wonders."

51 I said, "O sovereign Lord, explain this to me: Why did I see the man coming up from the heart of the sea?"

52 He said to me, "Just as no one can explore or know what is in the depths of the sea, so no one on earth can see my Son or those who are with him, except in the time of his day. 53 This is the interpretation of the dream that you saw. And you alone have been enlightened about this, 54 because you have forsaken your own ways and have applied yourself to mine, and have searched out my law; 55 for you have devoted your life to wisdom, and called understanding your mother."
Conclusion and injunctions

56 Therefore I have shown you these things; for there is a reward laid up with the Most High. For it will be that after three more days I will tell you other things, and explain weighty and wondrous matters to you."

57 Then I got up and walked in the field, giving great glory and praise to the Most High for the wonders that he does from time to time, 58 and because he governs the times and whatever things come to pass in their seasons. And I stayed there three days.

[2 Esdras 14]
The seventh vision

1 On the third day, while I was sitting under an oak, suddenly a voice came out of a bush opposite me and said, "Ezra, Ezra!" 2 And I answered, "Here I am, Lord," and I rose to my feet. 3 Then he said to me, "I revealed myself in a bush and spoke to Moses when my people were in bondage in Egypt; 4 and I sent him and led my people out of Egypt; and I led him up on Mount Sinai, where I kept him with me many days. 5 I told him many wondrous things, and showed him the secrets of the times and declared to him the end of the times. Then I commanded him, saying, 6 'These words you shall publish openly, and these you shall keep secret.' 7 And now I say to you: 8 Lay up in your heart the signs that I have shown you, the dreams that you have seen, and the interpretations that you have heard; 9 for you shall be taken up from among humankind, and henceforth you shall live with my Son and with those who are like you, until the times are ended. 10 The age has lost its youth, and the times begin to grow old. 11 For the age is divided into twelve parts, and nine of its parts have already passed, 12 as well as half of the tenth part; so two of its parts remain, besides half of the tenth part. 13 Now therefore, set your house in order, and reprove your people; comfort the lowly among them, and instruct those that are wise. And now renounce the life that is corruptible, 14 and put away from you mortal thoughts; cast away from you the burdens of humankind, and divest yourself now of your weak nature; 15 lay to one side the thoughts that are most grievous to you, and
hurry to escape from these times. 16 For evils worse than those that you
have now seen happen shall take place hereafter. 17 For the weaker
the world becomes through old age, the more shall evils be increased
upon its inhabitants. 18 Truth shall go farther away, and falsehood
shall come near. For the eagle that you saw in the vision is already
hurrying to come."

**Ezra's prayer for inspiration to restore the holy scriptures is granted**

19 Then I answered and said, "Let me speak in your presence, Lord. 20
For I will go, as you have commanded me, and I will reprove the people
who are now living; but who will warn those who will be born
hereafter? For the world lies in darkness, and its inhabitants are
without light. 21 For your law has been burned, and so no one knows
the things which have been done or will be done by you. 22 If then I
have found favor with you, send the holy spirit into me, and I will write
everything that has happened in the world from the beginning, the
things that were written in your law, so that people may be able to
find the path, and that those who want to live in the last days may do
so."

23 He answered me and said, "Go and gather the people, and tell them
not to seek you for forty days. 24 But prepare for yourself many writing
tablets, and take with you Sarea, Dabria, Selemia, Ethanus, and Asiel —
these five, who are trained to write rapidly; 25 and you shall come
here, and I will light in your heart the lamp of understanding, which
shall not be put out until what you are about to write is finished. 26
And when you have finished, some things you shall make public, and
some you shall deliver in secret to the wise; tomorrow at this hour you
shall begin to write."

**Ezra reproves the people**

27 Then I went as he commanded me, and I gathered all the people
together, and said, 28 "Hear these words, O Israel. 29 At first our
ancestors lived as aliens in Egypt, and they were liberated from there
30 and received the law of life, which they did not keep, which you
also have transgressed after them. 31 Then land was given to you for a
possession in the land of Zion; but you and your ancestors committed iniquity and did not keep the ways that the Most High commanded you. 32 And since he is a righteous judge, in due time he took from you what he had given. 33 And now you are here, and your people are farther in the interior. 34 If you, then, will rule over your minds and discipline your hearts, you shall be kept alive, and after death you shall obtain mercy. 35 For after death the judgment will come, when we shall live again; and then the names of the righteous shall become manifest, and the deeds of the ungodly shall be disclosed. 36 But let no one come to me now, and let no one seek me for forty days."

The revelation of scriptures

37 So I took the five men, as he commanded me, and we proceeded to the field, and remained there. 38 And on the next day a voice called me, saying, "Ezra, open your mouth and drink what I give you to drink." 39 So I opened my mouth, and a full cup was offered to me; it was full of something like water, but its color was like fire. 40 I took it and drank; and when I had drunk it, my heart poured forth understanding, and wisdom increased in my breast, for my spirit retained its memory, 41 and my mouth was opened and was no longer closed. 42 Moreover, the Most High gave understanding to the five men, and by turns they wrote what was dictated, using characters that they did not know. They sat forty days; they wrote during the daytime, and ate their bread at night. 43 But as for me, I spoke in the daytime and was not silent at night. 44 So during the forty days, ninety-four books were written. 45 And when the forty days were ended, the Most High spoke to me, saying, "Make public the twenty-four books that you wrote first, and let the worthy and the unworthy read them; 46 but keep the seventy that were written last, in order to give them to the wise among your people. 47 For in them is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge." 48 And I did so.
[2 Esdras 15]
(Chs 15-16 comprise a separate literary composition also known as 6 Ezra.)
The commissioning of the prophet

1 Speak in the ears of my people the words of the prophecy that I will put in your mouth, says the Lord, 2 and cause them to be written on paper; for they are trustworthy and true. 3 Do not fear the plots against you, and do not be troubled by the unbelief of those who oppose you. 4 For all unbelievers shall die in their unbelief.

Prediction of worldwide catastrophes

5 Beware, says the Lord, I am bringing evils upon the world, the sword and famine, death and destruction, 6 because iniquity has spread throughout every land, and their harmful doings have reached their limit. 7 Therefore, says the Lord, 8 I will be silent no longer concerning their ungodly acts that they impiously commit, neither will I tolerate their wicked practices. Innocent and righteous blood cries out to me, and the souls of the righteous cry out continually. 9 I will surely avenge them, says the Lord, and will receive to myself all the innocent blood from among them. 10 See, my people are being led like a flock to the slaughter; I will not allow them to live any longer in the land of Egypt, 11 but I will bring them out with a mighty hand and with an uplifted arm, and will strike Egypt with plagues, as before, and will destroy all its land.

12 Let Egypt mourn, and its foundations, because of the plague of chastisement and castigation that the Lord will bring upon it. 13 Let the farmers that till the ground mourn, because their seed shall fail to grow and their trees shall be ruined by blight and hail and by a terrible tempest. 14 Alas for the world and for those who live in it! 15 For the sword and misery draw near them, and nation shall rise up to fight against nation, with swords in their hands. 16 For there shall be unrest among people; growing strong against one another, they shall in their might have no respect for their king or the chief of their leaders. 17 For a person will desire to go into a city, and shall not be able to do so. 18 Because of their pride the cities shall be in confusion, the houses shall
be destroyed, and people shall be afraid. 19 People shall have no pity for their neighbors, but shall make an assault upon their houses with the sword, and plunder their goods, because of hunger for bread and because of great tribulation.

20 See how I am calling together all the kings of the earth to turn to me, says God, from the rising sun and from the south, from the east and from Lebanon; to turn and repay what they have given them. 21 Just as they have done to my elect until this day, so I will do, and will repay into their bosom. Thus says the Lord God: 22 My right hand will not spare the sinners, and my sword will not cease from those who shed innocent blood on earth. 23 And a fire went forth from his wrath, and consumed the foundations of the earth and the sinners, like burnt straw. 24 Alas for those who sin and do not observe my commandments, says the Lord; 25 I will not spare them. Depart, you faithless children! Do not pollute my sanctuary. 26 For God knows all who sin against him; therefore he will hand them over to death and slaughter. 27 Already calamities have come upon the whole earth, and you shall remain in them; God will not deliver you, because you have sinned against him.

A vision of warfare in the east

28 What a terrifying sight, appearing from the east! 29 The nations of the dragons of Arabia shall come out with many chariots, and from the day that they set out, their hissing shall spread over the earth, so that all who hear them will fear and tremble. 30 Also the Carmonians, raging in wrath, shall go forth like wild boars from the forest, and with great power they shall come and engage them in battle, and with their tusks they shall devastate a portion of the land of the Assyrians with their teeth. 31 And then the dragons, remembering their origin, shall become still stronger; and if they combine in great power and turn to pursue them, 32 then these shall be disorganized and silenced by their power, and shall turn and flee. 33 And from the land of the Assyrians an enemy in ambush shall attack them and destroy one of them, and fear and trembling shall come upon their army, and indecision upon their kings.
A vision of destructive storm clouds

34 See the clouds from the east, and from the north to the south! Their appearance is exceedingly threatening, full of wrath and storm. 35 They shall clash against one another and shall pour out a heavy tempest on the earth, and their own tempest; and there shall be blood from the sword as high as a horse's belly 36 and a man's thigh and a camel's hock. 37 And there shall be fear and great trembling on the earth; those who see that wrath shall be horror-stricken, and they shall be seized with trembling. 38 After that, heavy storm clouds shall be stirred up from the south, and from the north, and another part from the west. 39 But the winds from the east shall prevail over the cloud that was raised in wrath, and shall dispel it; and the tempest that was to cause destruction by the east wind shall be driven violently toward the south and west. 40 Great and mighty clouds, full of wrath and tempest, shall rise and destroy all the earth and its inhabitants, and shall pour out upon every high and lofty place a terrible tempest, 41 fire and hail and flying swords and floods of water, so that all the fields and all the streams shall be filled with the abundance of those waters. 42 They shall destroy cities and walls, mountains and hills, trees of the forests, and grass of the meadows, and their grain. 43 They shall go on steadily to Babylon and blot it out. 44 They shall come to it and surround it; they shall pour out on it the tempest and all its fury; then the dust and smoke shall reach the sky, and all who are around it shall mourn for it. 45 And those who survive shall serve those who have destroyed it.

46 And you, Asia, who share in the splendor of Babylon and the glory of her person — 47 woe to you, miserable wretch! For you have made yourself like her; you have decked out your daughters for prostitution to please and glory in your lovers, who have always lusted after you. 48 You have imitated that hateful one in all her deeds and devices. Therefore God says, 49 I will send evils upon you: widowhood, poverty, famine, sword, and pestilence, bringing ruin to your houses, bringing destruction and death. 50 And the glory of your strength shall wither like a flower when the heat shall rise that is sent upon you. 51 You shall be weakened like a wretched woman who is beaten and wounded, so that you cannot receive your mighty lovers. 52 Would I have dealt with
you so violently, says the Lord, if you had not killed my chosen people continually, exulting and clapping your hands and talking about their death when you were drunk?

54 Beautify your face! 55 The reward of a prostitute is in your lap; therefore you shall receive your recompense. 56 As you will do to my chosen people, says the Lord, so God will do to you, and will hand you over to adversities. 57 Your children shall die of hunger, and you shall fall by the sword; your cities shall be wiped out, and all your people who are in the open country shall fall by the sword. 58 Those who are in the mountains and highlands shall perish of hunger, and they shall eat their own flesh in hunger for bread and drink their own blood in thirst for water. 59 Unhappy above all others, you shall come and suffer fresh miseries. 60 As they pass by they shall crush the hateful city, and shall destroy a part of your land and abolish a portion of your glory, when they return from devastated Babylon. 61 You shall be broken down by them like stubble, and they shall be like fire to you. 62 They shall devour you and your cities, your land and your mountains; they shall burn with fire all your forests and your fruitful trees. 63 They shall carry your children away captive, plunder your wealth, and mar the glory of your countenance.

[2 Esdras 16]
The inevitability of God's judgment

1 Woe to you, Babylon and Asia! Woe to you, Egypt and Syria! 2 Bind on sackcloth and cloth of goats' hair, and wail for your children, and lament for them; for your destruction is at hand. 3 The sword has been sent upon you, and who is there to turn it back? 4 A fire has been sent upon you, and who is there to quench it? 5 Calamities have been sent upon you, and who is there to drive them away? 6 Can one drive off a hungry lion in the forest, or quench a fire in the stubble once it has started to burn? 7 Can one turn back an arrow shot by a strong archer? 8 The Lord God sends calamities, and who will drive them away? 9 Fire will go forth from his wrath, and who is there to quench it? 10 He will flash lightning, and who will not be afraid? He will thunder, and who will not be terrified? 11 The Lord will threaten, and who will not be utterly shattered at his presence? 12 The earth and its foundations
quake, the sea is churned up from the depths, and its waves and the fish with them shall be troubled at the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. 13 For his right hand that bends the bow is strong, and his arrows that he shoots are sharp and when they are shot to the ends of the world will not miss once. 14 Calamities are sent forth and shall not return until they come over the earth. 15 The fire is kindled, and shall not be put out until it consumes the foundations of the earth. 16 Just as an arrow shot by a mighty archer does not return, so the calamities that are sent upon the earth shall not return. 17 Alas for me! Alas for me! Who will deliver me in those days?

Prediction of desolation on the earth

18 The beginning of sorrows, when there shall be much lamentation; the beginning of famine, when many shall perish; the beginning of wars, when the powers shall be terrified; the beginning of calamities, when all shall tremble. What shall they do, when the calamities come? 19 Famine and plague, tribulation and anguish are sent as scourges for the correction of humankind. 20 Yet for all this they will not turn from their iniquities, or ever be mindful of the scourges. 21 Indeed, provisions will be so cheap upon earth that people will imagine that peace is assured for them, and then calamities shall spring up on the earth — the sword, famine, and great confusion. 22 For many of those who live on the earth shall perish by famine; and those who survive the famine shall die by the sword. 23 And the dead shall be thrown out like dung, and there shall be no one to console them; for the earth shall be left desolate, and its cities shall be demolished. 24 No one shall be left to cultivate the earth or to sow it. 25 The trees shall bear fruit, but who will gather it? 26 The grapes shall ripen, but who will tread them? For in all places there shall be great solitude; 27 a person will long to see another human being, or even to hear a human voice. 28 For ten shall be left out of a city; and two, out of the field, those who have hidden themselves in thick groves and clefts in the rocks. 29 Just as in an olive orchard three or four olives may be left on every tree, 30 or just as, when a vineyard is gathered, some clusters may be left by those who search carefully through the vineyard, 31 so in those days three or four shall be left by those who search their houses with the sword. 32 The earth shall be left desolate, and its fields shall be plowed up, and its
roads and all its paths shall bring forth thorns, because no sheep will go along them. 33 Virgins shall mourn because they have no bridegrooms; women shall mourn because they have no husbands; their daughters shall mourn, because they have no help. 34 Their bridegrooms shall be killed in war, and their husbands shall perish of famine.

Exhortation of God's people

35 Listen now to these things, and understand them, you who are servants of the Lord. 36 This is the word of the Lord; receive it and do not disbelieve what the Lord says. 37 The calamities draw near, and are not delayed. 38 Just as a pregnant woman, in the ninth month when the time of her delivery draws near, has great pains around her womb for two or three hours beforehand, but when the child comes forth from the womb, there will not be a moment's delay, 39 so the calamities will not delay in coming upon the earth, and the world will groan, and pains will seize it on every side.

40 Hear my words, O my people; prepare for battle, and in the midst of the calamities be like strangers on the earth. 41 Let the one who sells be like one who will flee; let the one who buys be like one who will lose; 42 let the one who does business be like one who will not make a profit; and let the one who builds a house be like one who will not live in it; 43 let the one who sows be like one who will not reap; so also the one who prunes the vines, like one who will not gather the grapes; 44 those who marry, like those who will have no children; and those who do not marry, like those who are widowed. 45 Because of this, those who labor, labor in vain; 46 for strangers shall gather their fruits, and plunder their goods, overthrow their houses, and take their children captive; for in captivity and famine they will produce their children. 47 Those who conduct business, do so only to have it plundered; the more they adorn their cities, their houses and possessions, and their persons, 48 the more angry I will be with them for their sins, says the Lord. 49 Just as a respectable and virtuous woman abhors a prostitute, 50 so righteousness shall abhor iniquity, when she decks herself out, and shall accuse her to her face when he comes who will defend the one who searches out every sin on earth.
51 Therefore do not be like her or her works. 52 For in a very short time iniquity will be removed from the earth, and righteousness will reign over us.

The impossibility of hiding sins from God

53 Sinners must not say that they have not sinned; for God will burn coals of fire on the head of everyone who says, "I have not sinned before God and his glory." 54 The Lord certainly knows everything that people do; he knows their imaginations and their thoughts and their hearts. 55 He said, "Let the earth be made," and it was made, and "Let the heaven be made," and it was made. 56 At his word the stars were fixed in their places, and he knows the number of the stars. 57 He searches the abyss and its treasures; he has measured the sea and its contents; 58 he has confined the sea in the midst of the waters; and by his word he has suspended the earth over the water. 59 He has spread out the heaven like a dome and made it secure upon the waters; 60 he has put springs of water in the desert, and pools on the tops of the mountains, so as to send rivers from the heights to water the earth. 61 He formed human beings and put a heart in the midst of each body, and gave each person breath and life and understanding 62 and the spirit of Almighty God, who surely made all things and searches out hidden things in hidden places. 63 He knows your imaginations and what you think in your hearts! Woe to those who sin and want to hide their sins! 64 The Lord will strictly examine all their works, and will make a public spectacle of all of you. 65 You shall be put to shame when your sins come out before others, and your own iniquities shall stand as your accusers on that day. 66 What will you do? Or how will you hide your sins before the Lord and his glory? 67 Indeed, God is the judge; fear him! Cease from your sins, and forget your iniquities, never to commit them again; so God will lead you forth and deliver you from all tribulation.

Prediction of persecutions

68 The burning wrath of a great multitude is kindled over you; they shall drag some of you away and force you to eat what was sacrificed to idols. 69 And those who consent to eat shall be held in derision and
contempt, and shall be trampled under foot. 70 For in many places and in neighboring cities there shall be a great uprising against those who fear the Lord. 71 They shall be like maniacs, sparing no one, but plundering and destroying those who continue to fear the Lord. 72 For they shall destroy and plunder their goods, and drive them out of house and home. 73 Then the tested quality of my elect shall be manifest, like gold that is tested by fire.

Concluding instructions to the elect

74 Listen, my elect ones, says the Lord; the days of tribulation are at hand, but I will deliver you from them. 75 Do not fear or doubt, for God is your guide. 76 You who keep my commandments and precepts, says the Lord God, must not let your sins weigh you down, or your iniquities prevail over you. 77 Woe to those who are choked by their sins and overwhelmed by their iniquities! They are like a field choked with underbrush and its path overwhelmed with thorns, so that no one can pass through. 78 It is shut off and given up to be consumed by fire.
4 Maccabees

Introduction

Although not a part of the canon of scripture of any religious community, 4 Maccabees is included in some important manuscripts of the Septuagint (the Greek Bible), and its particularly vivid, sometimes morbid, presentation of unflinching commitment to one's faith was a source of inspiration for Jews during the Hellenistic era. Despite its title, 4 Maccabees has little to do with the Maccabean family or their armed revolt against Seleucid rule during the second century BCE (see the introductions to 1 and 2 Maccabees). The focus instead is on heroes of a different sort, a group of Jewish martyrs who endure torture and execution out of loyalty to their God and their people. According to the interpretation advanced by the book, it was their noble sacrifice, not any military or political exploits, that ultimately secured God's favor for the Jews and rescued them from apostasy and foreign oppression (18.3-5).

Part moral treatise, part funeral oration, 4 Maccabees is a classic example of the interpretation of Jewish religion in terms of Greco-Roman intellectual and rhetorical conventions. Indeed, Judaism is even presented as "a philosophy in accordance with devout reason" (8.1; see also 1.1; 5.4, 7, 7, 22, 35; 7.7, 9, 21; 8.15). As such, its adherents are trained to exercise control over the ruinous influence of irrational emotions such as desire and fear, to prevail over the cruel injustices of tyranny, and to embody moral virtues, especially piety, wisdom, and courage. The book's underlying contention is that strict adherence to Judaism actually fulfills the highest ideals of Hellenistic civilization, a pointed message for Jews under constant pressure to assimilate into the dominant, pagan culture.
The book has two major parts. The first (1.1-3.18) presents the philosophical thesis that "reason rules the emotions" (1.5), linking reason especially with "a way of life in accordance with the [Mosaic] law" (2.8). The second, longer part (3.19-18.19) dramatizes this thesis through a series of narratives that describe the brutal tortures inflicted by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes (who ruled from 175-164 BCE) on Eleazar, seven brothers, and their mother. These heroic stories, based on the much shorter accounts of 2 Maccabees 6-7, are meant to advocate loyalty to Judaism even in the most trying circumstances. Ultimately, the martyrs are meant to as exemplars for anyone who would "fight the sacred and noble battle for religion" (9.24; cf. 16.16). Conversely, Antiochus, portrayed as a shameless, impious, and bloodthirsty tyrant (e.g., 11.3-6; 12.11-14), represents the epitome of Gentile vice.

The book's theology, emphasizing veneration of the patriarchs, obedience to the law, and the sovereignty of God, is fully Jewish, with two distinctive features. First, the martyrdoms are interpreted as a substitutionary atonement that expiates the nation's sin and purifies the land (Atoning sacrifice: the virtuous martyrdoms are taken as sufficient punishment for the nation's apostasy, so that divine favor is restored). Second, in contrast to 2 Maccabees with its emphasis on bodily resurrection, 4 Maccabees speaks of God's final reward for the martyrs in terms of the immortality of the soul, reflecting Hellenistic ideas, which would directly influence Christianity.

Written in Greek by an unknown author, 4 Maccabees has sometimes been assigned to the period 20-54 CE, when Cilicia was joined to Syria and Phoenicia as a single province, although it in fact could have been written at any time during the late first century BCE or the first century CE. The book's place of origin is similarly uncertain. Jerusalem is a likely candidate, though Antioch, Alexandria, and other cities have been proposed. While it is unlikely that 4 Maccabees was known to any New Testament authors, the book's interpretation of martyrdom is representative of the theological milieu in which early Christians attached atoning significance to the suffering and death of Jesus (e.g., Mt 26.28; Mk 10.45; Rom 3.24-25; Heb 9.11-14; 1 Jn 1.7).
[4 Maccabees 1]
A philosophical introduction

1 The subject that I am about to discuss is most philosophical, that is, whether devout reason is sovereign over the emotions. So it is right for me to advise you to pay earnest attention to philosophy. 2 For the subject is essential to everyone who is seeking knowledge, and in addition it includes the praise of the highest virtue — I mean, of course, rational judgment. 3 If, then, it is evident that reason rules over those emotions that hinder self-control, namely, gluttony and lust, 4 it is also clear that it masters the emotions that hinder one from justice, such as malice, and those that stand in the way of courage, namely anger, fear, and pain. 5 Some might perhaps ask, "If reason rules the emotions, why is it not sovereign over forgetfulness and ignorance?" Their attempt at argument is ridiculous! 6 For reason does not rule its own emotions, but those that are opposed to justice, courage, and self-control; and it is not for the purpose of destroying them, but so that one may not give way to them.

7 I could prove to you from many and various examples that reason is dominant over the emotions, 8 but I can demonstrate it best from the noble bravery of those who died for the sake of virtue, Eleazar and the seven brothers and their mother. 9 All of these, by despising sufferings that bring death, demonstrated that reason controls the emotions. 10 On this anniversary it is fitting for me to praise for their virtues those who, with their mother, died for the sake of nobility and goodness, but I would also call them blessed for the honor in which they are held. 11 All people, even their torturers, marveled at their courage and endurance, and they became the cause of the downfall of tyranny over their nation. By their endurance they conquered the tyrant, and thus their native land was purified through them. 12 I shall shortly have an opportunity to speak of this; but, as my custom is, I shall begin by stating my main principle, and then I shall turn to their story, giving glory to the all-wise God.

13 Our inquiry, accordingly, is whether reason is sovereign over the emotions. 14 We shall decide just what reason is and what emotion is, how many kinds of emotions there are, and whether reason rules over
all these. 15 Now reason is the mind that with sound logic prefers the life of wisdom. 16 Wisdom, next, is the knowledge of divine and human matters and the causes of these. 17 This, in turn, is education in the law, by which we learn divine matters reverently and human affairs to our advantage. 18 Now the kinds of wisdom are rational judgment, justice, courage, and self-control. 19 Rational judgment is supreme over all of these, since by means of it reason rules over the emotions. 20 The two most comprehensive types of the emotions are pleasure and pain; and each of these is by nature concerned with both body and soul. 21 The emotions of both pleasure and pain have many consequences. 22 Thus desire precedes pleasure and delight follows it. 23 Fear precedes pain and sorrow comes after. 24 Anger, as a person will see by reflecting on this experience, is an emotion embracing pleasure and pain. 25 In pleasure there exists even a malevolent tendency, which is the most complex of all the emotions. 26 In the soul it is boastfulness, covetousness, thirst for honor, rivalry, and malice; 27 in the body, indiscriminate eating, gluttony, and solitary gormandizing.

28 Just as pleasure and pain are two plants growing from the body and the soul, so there are many offshoots of these plants, 29 each of which the master cultivator, reason, weeds and prunes and ties up and waters and thoroughly irrigates, and so tames the jungle of habits and emotions. 30 For reason is the guide of the virtues, but over the emotions it is sovereign.

Observe now, first of all, that rational judgment is sovereign over the emotions by virtue of the restraining power of self-control. 31 Self-control, then, is dominance over the desires. 32 Some desires are mental, others are physical, and reason obviously rules over both. 33 Otherwise, how is it that when we are attracted to forbidden foods we abstain from the pleasure to be had from them? Is it not because reason is able to rule over appetites? I for one think so. 34 Therefore when we crave seafood and fowl and animals and all sorts of foods that are forbidden to us by the law, we abstain because of domination by reason. 35 For the emotions of the appetites are restrained, checked by the temperate mind, and all the impulses of the body are bridled by reason.
1 And why is it amazing that the desires of the mind for the enjoyment of beauty are rendered powerless? 2 It is for this reason, certainly, that the temperate Joseph is praised, because by mental effort he overcame sexual desire. 3 For when he was young and in his prime for intercourse, by his reason he nullified the frenzy of the passions. 4 Not only is reason proved to rule over the frenzied urge of sexual desire, but also over every desire. 5 Thus the law says, "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or anything that is your neighbor's." 6 In fact, since the law has told us not to covet, I could prove to you all the more that reason is able to control desires.

Just so it is with the emotions that hinder one from justice. 7 Otherwise how could it be that someone who is habitually a solitary gormandizer, a glutton, or even a drunkard can learn a better way, unless reason is clearly lord of the emotions? 8 Thus, as soon as one adopts a way of life in accordance with the law, even though a lover of money, one is forced to act contrary to natural ways and to lend without interest to the needy and to cancel the debt when the seventh year arrives. 9 If one is greedy, one is ruled by the law through reason so that one neither gleans the harvest nor gathers the last grapes from the vineyard.

In all other matters we can recognize that reason rules the emotions. 10 For the law prevails even over affection for parents, so that virtue is not abandoned for their sakes. 11 It is superior to love for one's wife, so that one rebukes her when she breaks the law. 12 It takes precedence over love for children, so that one punishes them for misdeeds. 13 It is sovereign over the relationship of friends, so that one rebukes friends when they act wickedly. 14 Do not consider it paradoxical when reason, through the law, can prevail even over enmity. The fruit trees of the enemy are not cut down, but one preserves the property of enemies from marauders and helps raise up what has fallen.
It is evident that reason rules even the more violent emotions: lust for power, vainglory, boasting, arrogance, and malice. 16 For the temperate mind repels all these malicious emotions, just as it repels anger — for it is sovereign over even this. 17 When Moses was angry with Dathan and Abiram, he did nothing against them in anger, but controlled his anger by reason. 18 For, as I have said, the temperate mind is able to get the better of the emotions, to correct some, and to render others powerless. 19 Why else did Jacob, our most wise father, censure the households of Simeon and Levi for their irrational slaughter of the entire tribe of the Shechemites, saying, "Cursed be their anger"? 20 For if reason could not control anger, he would not have spoken thus. 21 Now when God fashioned human beings, he planted in them emotions and inclinations, 22 but at the same time he enthroned the mind among the senses as a sacred governor over them all. 23 To the mind he gave the law; and one who lives subject to this will rule a kingdom that is temperate, just, good, and courageous.

How is it then, one might say, that if reason is master of the emotions, it does not control forgetfulness and ignorance? [4 Maccabees 3] 1 But this argument is entirely ridiculous; for it is evident that reason rules not over its own emotions, but over those of the body. 2 No one of us can eradicate that kind of desire, but reason can provide a way for us not to be enslaved by desire. 3 No one of us can eradicate anger from the mind, but reason can help to deal with anger. 4 No one of us can eradicate malice, but reason can fight at our side so that we are not overcome by malice. 5 For reason does not uproot the emotions but is their antagonist.

The example of King David's thirst

6 Now this can be explained more clearly by the story of King David's thirst. 7 David had been attacking the Philistines all day long, and together with the soldiers of his nation had killed many of them. 8 Then when evening fell, he came, sweating and quite exhausted, to the royal tent, around which the whole army of our ancestors had encamped. 9 Now all the rest were at supper, 10 but the king was extremely thirsty, and though springs were plentiful there, he could not satisfy his thirst from them. 11 But a certain irrational desire for the
water in the enemy's territory tormented and inflamed him, undid and consumed him. 12 When his guards complained bitterly because of the king's craving, two staunch young soldiers, respecting the king's desire, armed themselves fully, and taking a pitcher climbed over the enemy's ramparts. 13 Eluding the sentinels at the gates, they went searching throughout the enemy camp 14 and found the spring, and from it boldly brought the king a drink. 15 But David, though he was burning with thirst, considered it an altogether fearful danger to his soul to drink what was regarded as equivalent to blood. 16 Therefore, opposing reason to desire, he poured out the drink as an offering to God. 17 For the temperate mind can conquer the drives of the emotions and quench the flames of frenzied desires; 18 it can overthrow bodily agonies even when they are extreme, and by nobility of reason spurn all domination by the emotions.

19 The present occasion now invites us to a narrative demonstration of temperate reason.

**Apollonius's attempt on the temple treasury**

20 At a time when our ancestors were enjoying profound peace because of their observance of the law and were prospering, so that even Seleucus Nicanor, king of Asia, had both appropriated money to them for the temple service and recognized their commonwealth — 21 just at that time certain persons attempted a revolution against the public harmony and caused many and various disasters.

[4 Maccabees 4]

1 Now there was a certain Simon, a political opponent of the noble and good man, Onias, who then held the high priesthood for life. When despite all manner of slander he was unable to injure Onias in the eyes of the nation, he fled the country with the purpose of betraying it. 2 So he came to Apollonius, governor of Syria, Phoenicia, and Cilicia, and said, 3 "I have come here because I am loyal to the king's government, to report that in the Jerusalem treasuries there are deposited tens of thousands in private funds, which are not the property of the temple but belong to King Seleucus." 4 When Apollonius learned the details of
these things, he praised Simon for his service to the king and went up to Seleucus to inform him of the rich treasure. 5 On receiving authority to deal with this matter, he proceeded quickly to our country accompanied by the accursed Simon and a very strong military force. 6 He said that he had come with the king's authority to seize the private funds in the treasury. 7 The people indignantly protested his words, considering it outrageous that those who had committed deposits to the sacred treasury should be deprived of them, and did all that they could to prevent it. 8 But, uttering threats, Apollonius went on to the temple. 9 While the priests together with women and children were imploring God in the temple to shield the holy place that was being treated so contemptuously, 10 and while Apollonius was going up with his armed forces to seize the money, angels on horseback with lightning flashing from their weapons appeared from heaven, instilling in them great fear and trembling. 11 Then Apollonius fell down half dead in the temple area that was open to all, stretched out his hands toward heaven, and with tears begged the Hebrews to pray for him and propitiate the wrath of the heavenly army. 12 For he said that he had committed a sin deserving of death, and that if he were spared he would praise the blessedness of the holy place before all people. 13 Moved by these words, the high priest Onias, although otherwise he had scruples about doing so, prayed for him so that King Seleucus would not suppose that Apollonius had been overcome by human treachery and not by divine justice. 14 So Apollonius, having been saved beyond all expectations, went away to report to the king what had happened to him.

**Antiochus's persecution of the Jews**

15 When King Seleucus died, his son Antiochus Epiphanes succeeded to the throne, an arrogant and terrible man, 16 who removed Onias from the priesthood and appointed Onias's brother Jason as high priest. 17 Jason agreed that if the office were conferred on him he would pay the king three thousand six hundred sixty talents annually. 18 So the king appointed him high priest and ruler of the nation. 19 Jason changed the nation's way of life and altered its form of government in complete violation of the law, 20 so that not only was a gymnasium constructed at the very citadel of our native land, but also the temple
service was abolished. 21 The divine justice was angered by these acts and caused Antiochus himself to make war on them. 22 For when he was warring against Ptolemy in Egypt, he heard that a rumor of his death had spread and that the people of Jerusalem had rejoiced greatly. He speedily marched against them, 23 and after he had plundered them he issued a decree that if any of them were found observing the ancestral law they should die. 24 When, by means of his decrees, he had not been able in any way to put an end to the people's observance of the law, but saw that all his threats and punishments were being disregarded 25 — even to the extent that women, because they had circumcised their sons, were thrown headlong from heights along with their infants, though they had known beforehand that they would suffer this — 26 when, I say, his decrees were despised by the people, he himself tried through torture to compel everyone in the nation to eat defiling foods and to renounce Judaism.

[4 Maccabees 5]
Martyrdom of Eleazar

1 The tyrant Antiochus, sitting in state with his counselors on a certain high place, and with his armed soldiers standing around him, 2 ordered the guards to seize each and every Hebrew and to compel them to eat pork and food sacrificed to idols. 3 If any were not willing to eat defiling food, they were to be broken on the wheel and killed. 4 When many persons had been rounded up, one man, Eleazar by name, leader of the flock, was brought before the king. He was a man of priestly family, learned in the law, advanced in age, and known to many in the tyrant's court because of his philosophy.

Antiochus's exhortation to apostasy

5 When Antiochus saw him he said, 6 "Before I begin to torture you, old man, I would advise you to save yourself by eating pork, 7 for I respect your age and your gray hairs. Although you have had them for so long a time, it does not seem to me that you are a philosopher when you observe the religion of the Jews. 8 When nature has granted it to us, why should you abhor eating the very excellent meat of this animal? 9 It is senseless not to enjoy delicious things that are not
shameful, and wrong to spurn the gifts of nature. 10 It seems to me that you will do something even more senseless if, by holding a vain opinion concerning the truth, you continue to despise me to your own hurt. 11 Will you not awaken from your foolish philosophy, dispel your futile reasonings, adopt a mind appropriate to your years, philosophize according to the truth of what is beneficial, 12 and have compassion on your old age by honoring my humane advice? 13 For consider this: if there is some power watching over this religion of yours, it will excuse you from any transgression that arises out of compulsion."

Eleazar's reply

14 When the tyrant urged him in this fashion to eat meat unlawfully, Eleazar asked to have a word. 15 When he had received permission to speak, he began to address the people as follows: 16 "We, O Antiochus, who have been persuaded to govern our lives by the divine law, think that there is no compulsion more powerful than our obedience to the law. 17 Therefore we consider that we should not transgress it in any respect. 18 Even if, as you suppose, our law were not truly divine and we had wrongly held it to be divine, not even so would it be right for us to invalidate our reputation for piety. 19 Therefore do not suppose that it would be a petty sin if we were to eat defiling food; 20 to transgress the law in matters either small or great is of equal seriousness, 21 for in either case the law is equally despised. 22 You scoff at our philosophy as though living by it were irrational, 23 but it teaches us self-control, so that we master all pleasures and desires, and it also trains us in courage, so that we endure any suffering willingly; 24 it instructs us in justice, so that in all our dealings we act impartially, and it teaches us piety, so that with proper reverence we worship the only living God.

25 "Therefore we do not eat defiling food; for since we believe that the law was established by God, we know that in the nature of things the Creator of the world in giving us the law has shown sympathy toward us. 26 He has permitted us to eat what will be most suitable for our lives, but he has forbidden us to eat meats that would be contrary to this. 27 It would be tyrannical for you to compel us not only to transgress the law, but also to eat in such a way that you may deride us
for eating defiling foods, which are most hateful to us. 28 But you shall have no such occasion to laugh at me, 29 nor will I transgress the sacred oaths of my ancestors concerning the keeping of the law, 30 not even if you gouge out my eyes and burn my entrails. 31 I am not so old and cowardly as not to be young in reason on behalf of piety. 32 Therefore get your torture wheels ready and fan the fire more vehemently! 33 I do not so pity my old age as to break the ancestral law by my own act. 34 I will not play false to you, O law that trained me, nor will I renounce you, beloved self-control. 35 I will not put you to shame, philosophical reason, nor will I reject you, honored priesthood and knowledge of the law. 36 You, O king, shall not defile the honorable mouth of my old age, nor my long life lived lawfully. 37 My ancestors will receive me as pure, as one who does not fear your violence even to death. 38 You may tyrannize the ungodly, but you shall not dominate my religious principles, either by words or through deeds."

[4 Maccabees 6]
Eleazar's torture and death

1 When Eleazar in this manner had made eloquent response to the exhortations of the tyrant, the guards who were standing by dragged him violently to the instruments of torture. 2 First they stripped the old man, though he remained adorned with the gracefulness of his piety. 3 After they had tied his arms on each side they flogged him, 4 while a herald who faced him cried out, "Obey the king's commands!" 5 But the courageous and noble man, like a true Eleazar, was unmoved, as though being tortured in a dream; 6 yet while the old man's eyes were raised to heaven, his flesh was being torn by scourges, his blood flowing, and his sides were being cut to pieces. 7 Although he fell to the ground because his body could not endure the agonies, he kept his reason upright and unswerving. 8 One of the cruel guards rushed at him and began to kick him in the side to make him get up again after he fell. 9 But he bore the pains and scorned the punishment and endured the tortures. 10 Like a noble athlete the old man, while being beaten, was victorious over his torturers; 11 in fact, with his face bathed in sweat, and gasping heavily for breath, he amazed even his torturers by his courageous spirit.
12 At that point, partly out of pity for his old age, partly out of sympathy from their acquaintance with him, partly out of admiration for his endurance, some of the king's retinue came to him and said, 14 "Eleazar, why are you so irrationally destroying yourself through these evil things? 15 We will set before you some cooked meat; save yourself by pretending to eat pork."

16 But Eleazar, as though more bitterly tormented by this counsel, cried out: 17 "Never may we, the children of Abraham, think so basely that out of cowardice we feign a role unbecoming to us! 18 For it would be irrational if having lived in accordance with truth up to old age and having maintained in accordance with law the reputation of such a life, we should now change our course and ourselves become a pattern of impiety to the young by setting them an example in the eating of defiling food. 20 It would be shameful if we should survive for a little while and during that time be a laughingstock to all for our cowardice, and be despised by the tyrant as unmanly by not contending even to death for our divine law. 22 Therefore, O children of Abraham, die nobly for your religion! 23 And you, guards of the tyrant, why do you delay?"

24 When they saw that he was so courageous in the face of the afflictions, and that he had not been changed by their compassion, the guards brought him to the fire. 25 There they burned him with maliciously contrived instruments, threw him down, and poured stinking liquids into his nostrils. 26 When he was now burned to his very bones and about to expire, he lifted up his eyes to God and said, 27 "You know, O God, that though I might have saved myself, I am dying in burning torments for the sake of the law. 28 Be merciful to your people, and let our punishment suffice for them. 29 Make my blood their purification, and take my life in exchange for theirs." 30 After he said this, the holy man died nobly in his tortures; even in the tortures of death he resisted, by virtue of reason, for the sake of the law.

31 Admittedly, then, devout reason is sovereign over the emotions. 32 For if the emotions had prevailed over reason, we would have testified to their domination. 33 But now that reason has conquered the
emotions, we properly attribute to it the power to govern. It is right for us to acknowledge the dominance of reason when it masters even external agonies. It would be ridiculous to deny it. I have proved not only that reason has mastered agonies, but also that it masters pleasures and in no respect yields to them.

[4 Maccabees 7]
An encomium on Eleazar

1 For like a most skillful pilot, the reason of our father Eleazar steered the ship of religion over the sea of the emotions, 2 and though buffeted by the stormings of the tyrant and overwhelmed by the mighty waves of tortures, 3 in no way did he turn the rudder of religion until he sailed into the haven of immortal victory. 4 No city besieged with many ingenious war machines has ever held out as did that most holy man. Although his sacred life was consumed by tortures and racks, he conquered the besiegers with the shield of his devout reason. 5 For in setting his mind firm like a jutting cliff, our father Eleazar broke the maddening waves of the emotions. 6 O priest, worthy of the priesthood, you neither defiled your sacred teeth nor profaned your stomach, which had room only for reverence and purity, by eating defiling foods. 7 O man in harmony with the law and philosopher of divine life! 8 Such should be those who are administrators of the law, shielding it with their own blood and noble sweat in sufferings even to death. 9 You, father, strengthened our loyalty to the law through your glorious endurance, and you did not abandon the holiness that you praised, but by your deeds you made your words of divine philosophy credible. 10 O aged man, more powerful than tortures; O elder, fiercer than fire; O supreme king over the passions, Eleazar! 11 For just as our father Aaron, armed with the censer, ran through the multitude of the people and conquered the fiery angel, 12 so the descendant of Aaron, Eleazar, though being consumed by the fire, remained unmoved in his reason. 13 Most amazing, indeed, though he was an old man, his body no longer tense and firm, his muscles flabby, his sinews feeble, he became young again 14 in spirit through reason; and by reason like that of Isaac he rendered the many-headed rack ineffective. 15 O man of blessed age and of
venerable gray hair and of law-abiding life, whom the faithful seal of death has perfected!

16 If, therefore, because of piety an aged man despised tortures even to death, most certainly devout reason is governor of the emotions. 17 Some perhaps might say, "Not all have full command of their emotions, because not all have prudent reason." 18 But as many as attend to religion with a whole heart, these alone are able to control the passions of the flesh, 19 since they believe that they, like our patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, do not die to God, but live to God. 20 No contradiction therefore arises when some persons appear to be dominated by their emotions because of the weakness of their reason. 21 What person who lives as a philosopher by the whole rule of philosophy, and trusts in God, 22 and knows that it is blessed to endure any suffering for the sake of virtue, would not be able to overcome the emotions through godliness? 23 For only the wise and courageous are masters of their emotions.

[4 Maccabees 8]
The martyrdom of the seven brothers; Antiochus confronts the seven brothers

1 For this is why even the very young, by following a philosophy in accordance with devout reason, have prevailed over the most painful instruments of torture. 2 For when the tyrant was conspicuously defeated in his first attempt, being unable to compel an aged man to eat defiling foods, then in violent rage he commanded that others of the Hebrew captives be brought, and that any who ate defiling food would be freed after eating, but if any were to refuse, they would be tortured even more cruelly.

3 When the tyrant had given these orders, seven brothers — handsome, modest, noble, and accomplished in every way — were brought before him along with their aged mother. 4 When the tyrant saw them, grouped about their mother as though a chorus, he was pleased with them. And struck by their appearance and nobility, he smiled at them, and summoned them nearer and said, 5 "Young men, with favorable feelings I admire each and every one of you, and greatly
respect the beauty and the number of such brothers. Not only do I advise you not to display the same madness as that of the old man who has just been tortured, but I also exhort you to yield to me and enjoy my friendship. Just as I am able to punish those who disobey my orders, so I can be a benefactor to those who obey me. 7 Trust me, then, and you will have positions of authority in my government if you will renounce the ancestral tradition of your national life. 8 Enjoy your youth by adopting the Greek way of life and by changing your manner of living. 9 But if by disobedience you rouse my anger, you will compel me to destroy each and every one of you with dreadful punishments through tortures. 10 Therefore take pity on yourselves. Even I, your enemy, have compassion for your youth and handsome appearance. 11 Will you not consider this, that if you disobey, nothing remains for you but to die on the rack?"

12 When he had said these things, he ordered the instruments of torture to be brought forward so as to persuade them out of fear to eat the defiling food. 13 When the guards had placed before them wheels and joint-dislocators, rack and hooks and catapults and caldrons, braziers and thumbscrews and iron claws and wedges and bellows, the tyrant resumed speaking: 14 "Be afraid, young fellows; whatever justice you revere will be merciful to you when you transgress under compulsion."

15 But when they had heard the inducements and saw the dreadful devices, not only were they not afraid, but they also opposed the tyrant with their own philosophy, and by their right reasoning nullified his tyranny. 16 Let us consider, on the other hand, what arguments might have been used if some of them had been cowardly and unmanly. Would they not have been the following? 17 "O wretches that we are and so senseless! Since the king has summoned and exhorted us to accept kind treatment if we obey him, 18 why do we take pleasure in vain resolves and venture upon a disobedience that brings death? 19 O men and brothers, should we not fear the instruments of torture and consider the threats of torments, and give up this vain opinion and this arrogance that threatens to destroy us? 20 Let us take pity on our youth and have compassion on our mother's age; 21 and let us seriously consider that if we disobey we are dead! 22
Also, divine justice will excuse us for fearing the king when we are under compulsion. 23 Why do we banish ourselves from this most pleasant life and deprive ourselves of this delightful world? 24 Let us not struggle against compulsion or take hollow pride in being put to the rack. 25 Not even the law itself would arbitrarily put us to death for fearing the instruments of torture. 26 Why does such contentiousness excite us and such a fatal stubbornness please us, when we can live in peace if we obey the king?"

27 But the youths, though about to be tortured, neither said any of these things nor even seriously considered them. 28 For they were contemptuous of the emotions and sovereign over agonies, 29 so that as soon as the tyrant had ceased counseling them to eat defiling food, all with one voice together, as from one mind, said:

[4 Maccabees 9]

1 "Why do you delay, O tyrant? For we are ready to die rather than transgress our ancestral commandments; 2 we are obviously putting our forebears to shame unless we should practice ready obedience to the law and to Moses our counselor. 3 Tyrant and counselor of lawlessness, in your hatred for us do not pity us more than we pity ourselves. 4 For we consider this pity of yours, which insures our safety through transgression of the law, to be more grievous than death itself. 5 You are trying to terrify us by threatening us with death by torture, as though a short time ago you learned nothing from Eleazar. 6 And if the aged men of the Hebrews because of their religion lived piously while enduring torture, it would be even more fitting that we young men should die despising your coercive tortures, which our aged instructor also overcame. 7 Therefore, tyrant, put us to the test; and if you take our lives because of our religion, do not suppose that you can injure us by torturing us. 8 For we, through this severe suffering and endurance, shall have the prize of virtue and shall be with God, on whose account we suffer; 9 but you, because of your bloodthirstiness toward us, will deservedly undergo from the divine justice eternal torment by fire."
Martyrdom of the eldest brother

When they had said these things, the tyrant was not only indignant, as at those who are disobedient, but also infuriated, as at those who are ungrateful. Then at his command the guards brought forward the eldest, and having torn off his tunic, they bound his hands and arms with thongs on each side. When they had worn themselves out beating him with scourges, without accomplishing anything, they placed him upon the wheel. When the noble youth was stretched out around this, his limbs were dislocated, and with every member disjointed he denounced the tyrant, saying, "Most abominable tyrant, enemy of heavenly justice, savage of mind, you are mangling me in this manner, not because I am a murderer, or as one who acts impiously, but because I protect the divine law." And when the guards said, "Agree to eat so that you may be released from the tortures," he replied, "You abominable lackeys, your wheel is not so powerful as to strangle my reason. Cut my limbs, burn my flesh, and twist my joints; through all these tortures I will convince you that children of the Hebrews alone are invincible where virtue is concerned." While he was saying these things, they spread fire under him, and while fanning the flames they tightened the wheel further. The wheel was completely smeared with blood, and the heap of coals was being quenched by the drippings of gore, and pieces of flesh were falling off the axles of the machine. Although the ligaments joining his bones were already severed, the courageous youth, worthy of Abraham, did not groan, but as though transformed by fire into immortality, he nobly endured the rackings. "Imitate me, brothers," he said. "Do not leave your post in my struggle or renounce our courageous family ties. Fight the sacred and noble battle for religion. Thereby the just Providence of our ancestors may become merciful to our nation and take vengeance on the accursed tyrant." When he had said this, the saintly youth broke the thread of life.

Martyrdom of the second brother

While all were marveling at his courageous spirit, the guards brought in the next eldest, and after fitting themselves with iron
gauntlets having sharp hooks, they bound him to the torture machine and catapult. 27 Before torturing him, they inquired if he were willing to eat, and they heard his noble decision. 28 These leopard-like beasts tore out his sinews with the iron hands, flayed all his flesh up to his chin, and tore away his scalp. But he steadfastly endured this agony and said, 29 "How sweet is any kind of death for the religion of our ancestors!" 30 To the tyrant he said, "Do you not think, you most savage tyrant, that you are being tortured more than I, as you see the arrogant design of your tyranny being defeated by our endurance for the sake of religion? 31 I lighten my pain by the joys that come from virtue, 32 but you suffer torture by the threats that come from impiety. You will not escape, you most abominable tyrant, the judgments of the divine wrath."

[4 Maccabees 10]
Martyrdom of the third brother

1 When he too had endured a glorious death, the third was led in, and many repeatedly urged him to save himself by tasting the meat. 2 But he shouted, "Do you not know that the same father begot me as well as those who died, and the same mother bore me, and that I was brought up on the same teachings? 3 I do not renounce the noble kinship that binds me to my brothers." 5 Enraged by the man's boldness, they disjointed his hands and feet with their instruments, dismembering him by prying his limbs from their sockets, 6 and breaking his fingers and arms and legs and elbows. 7 Since they were not able in any way to break his spirit, they abandoned the instruments and scalped him with their fingernails in a Scythian fashion. 8 They immediately brought him to the wheel, and while his vertebrae were being dislocated by this, he saw his own flesh torn all around and drops of blood flowing from his entrails. 9 When he was about to die, he said, 10 "We, most abominable tyrant, are suffering because of our godly training and virtue, 11 but you, because of your impiety and bloodthirstiness, will undergo unceasing torments."
Martyrdom of the fourth brother

12 When he too had died in a manner worthy of his brothers, they dragged in the fourth, saying, 13 "As for you, do not give way to the same insanity as your brothers, but obey the king and save yourself." 14 But he said to them, "You do not have a fire hot enough to make me play the coward. 15 No — by the blessed death of my brothers, by the eternal destruction of the tyrant, and by the everlasting life of the pious, I will not renounce our noble family ties. 16 Contrive tortures, tyrant, so that you may learn from them that I am a brother to those who have just now been tortured." 17 When he heard this, the bloodthirsty, murderous, and utterly abominable Antiochus gave orders to cut out his tongue. 18 But he said, "Even if you remove my organ of speech, God hears also those who are mute. 19 See, here is my tongue; cut it off, for in spite of this you will not make our reason speechless. 20 Gladly, for the sake of God, we let our bodily members be mutilated. 21 God will visit you swiftly, for you are cutting out a tongue that has been melodious with divine hymns."

[4 Maccabees 11]
Martyrdom of the fifth brother

1 When he too died, after being cruelly tortured, the fifth leaped up, saying, 2 "I will not refuse, tyrant, to be tortured for the sake of virtue. 3 I have come of my own accord, so that by murdering me you will incur punishment from the heavenly justice for even more crimes. 4 Hater of virtue, hater of humankind, for what act of ours are you destroying us in this way? 5 Is it because we revere the Creator of all things and live according to his virtuous law? 6 But these deeds deserve honors, not tortures." 9 While he was saying these things, the guards bound him and dragged him to the catapult; 10 they tied him to it on his knees, and fitting iron clamps on them, they twisted his back around the wedge on the wheel, so that he was completely curled back like a scorpion, and all his members were disjointed. 11 In this condition, gasping for breath and in anguish of body, 12 he said, "Tyrant, they are splendid favors that you grant us against your will, because through these noble sufferings you give us an opportunity to show our endurance for the law."
Martyrdom of the sixth brother

13 When he too had died, the sixth, a mere boy, was led in. When the tyrant inquired whether he was willing to eat and be released, he said, 14 "I am younger in age than my brothers, but I am their equal in mind. 15 Since to this end we were born and bred, we ought likewise to die for the same principles. 16 So if you intend to torture me for not eating defiling foods, go on torturing!" 17 When he had said this, they led him to the wheel. 18 He was carefully stretched tight upon it, his back was broken, and he was roasted from underneath. 19 To his back they applied sharp spits that had been heated in the fire, and pierced his ribs so that his entrails were burned through. 20 While being tortured he said, "O contest befitting holiness, in which so many of us brothers have been summoned to an arena of sufferings for religion, and in which we have not been defeated! 21 For religious knowledge, O tyrant, is invincible. 22 I also, equipped with nobility, will die with my brothers, 23 and I myself will bring a great avenger upon you, you inventor of tortures and enemy of those who are truly devout. 24 We six boys have paralyzed your tyranny. 25 Since you have not been able to persuade us to change our mind or to force us to eat defiling foods, is not this your downfall? 26 Your fire is cold to us, and the catapults painless, and your violence powerless. 27 For it is not the guards of the tyrant but those of the divine law that are set over us; therefore, unconquered, we hold fast to reason."

[4 Maccabees 12]
Martyrdom of the youngest brother

1 When he too, thrown into the caldron, had died a blessed death, the seventh and youngest of all came forward. 2 Even though the tyrant had been vehemently reproached by the brothers, he felt strong compassion for this child when he saw that he was already in fetters. He summoned him to come nearer and tried to persuade him, saying, 3 "You see the result of your brothers' stupidity, for they died in torments because of their disobedience. 4 You too, if you do not obey, will be miserably tortured and die before your time, 5 but if you yield to persuasion you will be my friend and a leader in the government of the kingdom." 6 When he had thus appealed to him, he sent for the
boy's mother to show compassion on her who had been bereaved of so many sons and to influence her to persuade the surviving son to obey and save himself. 7 But when his mother had exhorted him in the Hebrew language, as we shall tell a little later, 8 he said, "Let me loose, let me speak to the king and to all his friends that are with him." 9 Extremely pleased by the boy's declaration, they freed him at once. 10 Running to the nearest of the braziers, 11 he said, "You profane tyrant, most impious of all the wicked, since you have received good things and also your kingdom from God, were you not ashamed to murder his servants and torture on the wheel those who practice religion? 12 Because of this, justice has laid up for you intense and eternal fire and tortures, and these throughout all time will never let you go. 13 As a man, were you not ashamed, you most savage beast, to cut out the tongues of men who have feelings like yours and are made of the same elements as you, and to maltreat and torture them in this way? 14 Surely they by dying nobly fulfilled their service to God, but you will wail bitterly for having killed without cause the contestants for virtue." 15 Then because he too was about to die, he said, 16 "I do not desert the excellent example of my brothers, 17 and I call on the God of our ancestors to be merciful to our nation; 18 but on you he will take vengeance both in this present life and when you are dead." 19 After he had uttered these imprecations, he flung himself into the braziers and so ended his life.

[4 Maccabees 13]
An encomium

1 Since, then, the seven brothers despised sufferings even unto death, everyone must concede that devout reason is sovereign over the emotions. 2 For if they had been slaves to their emotions and had eaten defiling food, we would say that they had been conquered by these emotions. 3 But in fact it was not so. Instead, by reason, which is praised before God, they prevailed over their emotions. 4 The supremacy of the mind over these cannot be overlooked, for the brothers mastered both emotions and pains. 5 How then can one fail to confess the sovereignty of right reason over emotion in those who were not turned back by fiery agonies? 6 For just as towers jutting out over harbors hold back the threatening waves and make it calm for
those who sail into the inner basin, 7 so the seven-towered right reason of the youths, by fortifying the harbor of religion, conquered the tempest of the emotions. 8 For they constituted a holy chorus of religion and encouraged one another, saying, 9 "Brothers, let us die like brothers for the sake of the law; let us imitate the three youths in Assyria who despised the same ordeal of the furnace. 10 Let us not be cowardly in the demonstration of our piety." 11 While one said, "Courage, brother," another said, "Bear up nobly," 12 and another reminded them, "Remember whence you came, and the father by whose hand Isaac would have submitted to being slain for the sake of religion." 13 Each of them and all of them together looking at one another, cheerful and undaunted, said, "Let us with all our hearts consecrate ourselves to God, who gave us our lives, and let us use our bodies as a bulwark for the law. 14 Let us not fear him who thinks he is killing us, 15 for great is the struggle of the soul and the danger of eternal torment lying before those who transgress the commandment of God. 16 Therefore let us put on the full armor of self-control, which is divine reason. 17 For if we so die, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob will welcome us, and all the fathers will praise us." 18 Those who were left behind said to each of the brothers who were being dragged away, "Do not put us to shame, brother, or betray the brothers who have died before us."

19 You are not ignorant of the affection of family ties, which the divine and all-wise Providence has bequeathed through the fathers to their descendants and which was implanted in the mother's womb. 20 There each of the brothers spent the same length of time and was shaped during the same period of time; and growing from the same blood and through the same life, they were brought to the light of day. 21 When they were born after an equal time of gestation, they drank milk from the same fountains. From such embraces brotherly-loving souls are nourished; 22 and they grow stronger from this common nurture and daily companionship, and from both general education and our discipline in the law of God.

23 Therefore, when sympathy and brotherly affection had been so established, the brothers were the more sympathetic to one another. 24 Since they had been educated by the same law and trained in the
same virtues and brought up in right living, they loved one another all the more. 25 A common zeal for nobility strengthened their goodwill toward one another, and their concord, 26 because they could make their brotherly love more fervent with the aid of their religion. 27 But although nature and companionship and virtuous habits had augmented the affection of family ties, those who were left endured for the sake of religion, while watching their brothers being maltreated and tortured to death.

[4 Maccabees 14]

1 Furthermore, they encouraged them to face the torture, so that they not only despised their agonies, but also mastered the emotions of brotherly love.

2 O reason, more royal than kings and freer than the free! 3 O sacred and harmonious concord of the seven brothers on behalf of religion! 4 None of the seven youths proved coward or shrank from death, 5 but all of them, as though running the course toward immortality, hastened to death by torture. 6 Just as the hands and feet are moved in harmony with the guidance of the mind, so those holy youths, as though moved by an immortal spirit of devotion, agreed to go to death for its sake. 7 O most holy seven, brothers in harmony! For just as the seven days of creation move in choral dance around religion, 8 so these youths, forming a chorus, encircled the sevenfold fear of tortures and dissolved it. 9 Even now, we ourselves shudder as we hear of the suffering of these young men; they not only saw what was happening, not only heard the direct word of threat, but also bore the sufferings patiently, and in agonies of fire at that. 10 What could be more excruciatingly painful than this? For the power of fire is intense and swift, and it consumed their bodies quickly.

Reason and maternal affection

11 Do not consider it amazing that reason had full command over these men in their tortures, since the mind of woman despised even more diverse agonies, 12 for the mother of the seven young men bore up under the rackings of each one of her children.
13 Observe how complex is a mother's love for her children, which draws everything toward an emotion felt in her inmost parts. 14 Even unreasoning animals, as well as human beings, have a sympathy and parental love for their offspring. 15 For example, among birds, the ones that are tame protect their young by building on the housetops, 16 and the others, by building in precipitous chasms and in holes and tops of trees, hatch the nestlings and ward off the intruder. 17 If they are not able to keep the intruder away, they do what they can to help their young by flying in circles around them in the anguish of love, warning them with their own calls. 18 And why is it necessary to demonstrate sympathy for children by the example of unreasoning animals, 19 since even bees at the time for making honeycombs defend themselves against intruders and, as though with an iron dart, sting those who approach their hive and defend it even to the death? 20 But sympathy for her children did not sway the mother of the young men; she was of the same mind as Abraham.

[4 Maccabees 15]
An encomium praising the mother

1 O reason of the children, tyrant over the emotions! O religion, more desirable to the mother than her children! 2 Two courses were open to this mother, that of religion, and that of preserving her seven sons for a time, as the tyrant had promised. 3 She loved religion more, the religion that preserves them for eternal life according to God's promise. 4 In what manner might I express the emotions of parents who love their children? We impress upon the character of a small child a wondrous likeness both of mind and of form. Especially is this true of mothers, who because of their birth pangs have a deeper sympathy toward their offspring than do the fathers. 5 Considering that mothers are the weaker sex and give birth to many, they are more devoted to their children. 6 The mother of the seven boys, more than any other mother, loved her children. In seven pregnancies she had implanted in herself tender love toward them, 7 and because of the many pains she suffered with each of them she had sympathy for them; 8 yet because of the fear of God she disdained the temporary safety of her children. 9 Not only so, but also because of the nobility of her sons and their ready obedience to the law, she felt a greater tenderness toward them.
10 For they were righteous and self-controlled and brave and magnanimous, and loved their brothers and their mother, so that they obeyed her even to death in keeping the ordinances.

11 Nevertheless, though so many factors influenced the mother to suffer with them out of love for her children, in the case of none of them were the various tortures strong enough to pervert her reason. 12 But each child separately and all of them together the mother urged on to death for religion's sake. 13 O sacred nature and affection of parental love, yearning of parents toward offspring, nurture and indomitable suffering by mothers! 14 This mother, who saw them tortured and burned one by one, because of religion did not change her attitude. 15 She watched the flesh of her children being consumed by fire, their toes and fingers scattered on the ground, and the flesh of the head to the chin exposed like masks.

16 O mother, tried now by more bitter pains than even the birth pangs you suffered for them! 17 O woman, who alone gave birth to such complete devotion! 18 When the firstborn breathed his last, it did not turn you aside, nor when the second in torments looked at you piteously nor when the third expired; 19 nor did you weep when you looked at the eyes of each one in his tortures gazing boldly at the same agonies, and saw in their nostrils the signs of the approach of death. 20 When you saw the flesh of children burned upon the flesh of other children, severed hands upon hands, scalped heads upon heads, and corpses fallen on other corpses, and when you saw the place filled with many spectators of the torturings, you did not shed tears. 21 Neither the melodies of sirens nor the songs of swans attract the attention of their hearers as did the voices of the children in torture calling to their mother. 22 How great and how many torments the mother then suffered as her sons were tortured on the wheel and with the hot irons! 23 But devout reason, giving her heart a man's courage in the very midst of her emotions, strengthened her to disregard, for the time, her parental love.

24 Although she witnessed the destruction of seven children and the ingenious and various rackings, this noble mother disregarded all these because of faith in God. 25 For as in the council chamber of her own
soul she saw mighty advocates — nature, family, parental love, and the
rackings of her children — 26 this mother held two ballots, one bearing
death and the other deliverance for her children. 27 She did not
approve the deliverance that would preserve the seven sons for a short
time, 28 but as the daughter of God-fearing Abraham she remembered
his fortitude.

29 O mother of the nation, vindicator of the law and champion of
religion, who carried away the prize of the contest in your heart! 30 O
more noble than males in steadfastness, and more courageous than
men in endurance! 31 Just as Noah's ark, carrying the world in the
universal flood, stoutly endured the waves, 32 so you, O guardian of
the law, overwhelmed from every side by the flood of your emotions
and the violent winds, the torture of your sons, endured nobly and
withstood the wintry storms that assail religion.

[4 Maccabees 16]
The mother's martyrdom

1 If, then, a woman, advanced in years and mother of seven sons,
endured seeing her children tortured to death, it must be admitted
that devout reason is sovereign over the emotions. 2 Thus I have
demonstrated not only that men have ruled over the emotions, but
also that a woman has despised the fiercest tortures. 3 The lions
surrounding Daniel were not so savage, nor was the raging fiery
furnace of Mishael so intensely hot, as was her innate parental love,
inflamed as she saw her seven sons tortured in such varied ways. 4 But
the mother quenched so many and such great emotions by devout
reason.

5 Consider this also: If this woman, though a mother, had been
fainthearted, she would have mourned over them and perhaps spoken
as follows: 6 "O how wretched am I and many times unhappy! After
bearing seven children, I am now the mother of none! 7 O seven
childbirths all in vain, seven profitless pregnancies, fruitless nurturings
and wretched nursings! 8 In vain, my sons, I endured many birth pangs
for you, and the more grievous anxieties of your upbringing. 9 Alas for
my children, some unmarried, others married and without offspring. I
shall not see your children or have the happiness of being called grandmother. 10 Alas, I who had so many and beautiful children am a widow and alone, with many sorrows. 11 And when I die, I shall have none of my sons to bury me."

12 Yet that holy and God-fearing mother did not wail with such a lament for any of them, nor did she dissuade any of them from dying, nor did she grieve as they were dying. 13 On the contrary, as though having a mind like adamant and giving rebirth for immortality to the whole number of her sons, she implored them and urged them on to death for the sake of religion. 14 O mother, soldier of God in the cause of religion, elder and woman! By steadfastness you have conquered even a tyrant, and in word and deed you have proved more powerful than a man. 15 For when you and your sons were arrested together, you stood and watched Eleazar being tortured, and said to your sons in the Hebrew language, 16 "My sons, noble is the contest to which you are called to bear witness for the nation. Fight zealously for our ancestral law. 17 For it would be shameful if, while an aged man endures such agonies for the sake of religion, you young men were to be terrified by tortures. 18 Remember that it is through God that you have had a share in the world and have enjoyed life, 19 and therefore you ought to endure any suffering for the sake of God. 20 For his sake also our father Abraham was zealous to sacrifice his son Isaac, the ancestor of our nation; and when Isaac saw his father's hand wielding a knife and descending upon him, he did not cower. 21 Daniel the righteous was thrown to the lions, and Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael were hurled into the fiery furnace and endured it for the sake of God. 22 You too must have the same faith in God and not be grieved. 23 It is unreasonable for people who have religious knowledge not to withstand pain."

24 By these words the mother of the seven encouraged and persuaded each of her sons to die rather than violate God's commandment. 25 They knew also that those who die for the sake of God live to God, as do Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the patriarchs.
[4 Maccabees 17]

1 Some of the guards said that when she also was about to be seized and put to death she threw herself into the flames so that no one might touch her body.

A second encomium

2 O mother, who with your seven sons nullified the violence of the tyrant, frustrated his evil designs, and showed the courage of your faith! 3 Nobly set like a roof on the pillars of your sons, you held firm and unswerving against the earthquake of the tortures. 4 Take courage, therefore, O holy-minded mother, maintaining firm an enduring hope in God. 5 The moon in heaven, with the stars, does not stand so august as you, who, after lighting the way of your star-like seven sons to piety, stand in honor before God and are firmly set in heaven with them. 6 For your children were true descendants of father Abraham.

A final encomium

7 If it were possible for us to paint the history of your religion as an artist might, would not those who first beheld it have shuddered as they saw the mother of the seven children enduring their varied tortures to death for the sake of religion? 8 Indeed it would be proper to inscribe on their tomb these words as a reminder to the people of our nation:

9 "Here lie buried an aged priest and an aged woman and seven sons, because of the violence of the tyrant who wished to destroy the way of life of the Hebrews. 10 They vindicated their nation, looking to God and enduring torture even to death."

11 Truly the contest in which they were engaged was divine, 12 for on that day virtue gave the awards and tested them for their endurance. The prize was immortality in endless life. 13 Eleazar was the first contestant, the mother of the seven sons entered the competition, and the brothers contended. 14 The tyrant was the antagonist, and the
world and the human race were the spectators. 15 Reverence for God was victor and gave the crown to its own athletes. 16 Who did not admire the athletes of the divine legislation? Who were not amazed?

17 The tyrant himself and all his council marveled at their endurance, 18 because of which they now stand before the divine throne and live the life of eternal blessedness. 19 For Moses says, "All who are consecrated are under your hands." 20 These, then, who have been consecrated for the sake of God, are honored, not only with this honor, but also by the fact that because of them our enemies did not rule over our nation, 21 the tyrant was punished, and the homeland purified — they having become, as it were, a ransom for the sin of our nation. 22 And through the blood of those devout ones and their death as an atoning sacrifice, divine Providence preserved Israel that previously had been mistreated.

23 For the tyrant Antiochus, when he saw the courage of their virtue and their endurance under the tortures, proclaimed them to his soldiers as an example for their own endurance, 24 and this made them brave and courageous for infantry battle and siege, and he ravaged and conquered all his enemies.

[4 Maccabees 18]

1 O Israelite children, offspring of the seed of Abraham, obey this law and exercise piety in every way, 2 knowing that devout reason is master of all emotions, not only of sufferings from within, but also of those from without.

3 Therefore those who gave over their bodies in suffering for the sake of religion were not only admired by mortals, but also were deemed worthy to share in a divine inheritance. 4 Because of them the nation gained peace, and by reviving observance of the law in the homeland they ravaged the enemy. 5 The tyrant Antiochus was both punished on earth and is being chastised after his death. Since in no way whatever was he able to compel the Israelites to become pagans and to abandon their ancestral customs, he left Jerusalem and marched against the Persians.
The mother’s last words

6 The mother of seven sons expressed also these principles to her children: 7 "I was a pure virgin and did not go outside my father's house; but I guarded the rib from which woman was made. 8 No seducer corrupted me on a desert plain, nor did the destroyer, the deceitful serpent, defile the purity of my virginity. 9 In the time of my maturity I remained with my husband, and when these sons had grown up their father died. A happy man was he, who lived out his life with good children, and did not have the grief of bereavement. 10 While he was still with you, he taught you the law and the prophets. 11 He read to you about Abel slain by Cain, and Isaac who was offered as a burnt offering, and about Joseph in prison. 12 He told you of the zeal of Phinehas, and he taught you about Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael in the fire. 13 He praised Daniel in the den of the lions and blessed him. 14 He reminded you of the scripture of Isaiah, which says, 'Even though you go through the fire, the flame shall not consume you.' 15 He sang to you songs of the psalmist David, who said, 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous.' 16 He recounted to you Solomon's proverb, 'There is a tree of life for those who do his will.' 17 He confirmed the query of Ezekiel, 'Shall these dry bones live?' 18 For he did not forget to teach you the song that Moses taught, which says, 19 'I kill and I make alive: this is your life and the length of your days.'"

The conclusion

20 O bitter was that day — and yet not bitter — when that bitter tyrant of the Greeks quenched fire with fire in his cruel caldrons, and in his burning rage brought those seven sons of the daughter of Abraham to the catapult and back again to more tortures, 21 pierced the pupils of their eyes and cut out their tongues, and put them to death with various tortures. 22 For these crimes divine justice pursued and will pursue the accursed tyrant. 23 But the sons of Abraham with their victorious mother are gathered together into the chorus of the fathers, and have received pure and immortal souls from God, 24 to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.
THE NEW TESTAMENT
with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books

Zaine Ridling, Ph.D.
Editor

New Revised Standard Version

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INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPELS

The Literary Genre of the Gospels

The opening of Mark's Gospel, "The beginning of the good news [or "gospel"] of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1.1), uses the word "gospel" for the message about salvation through Jesus. The word "gospel" (Gk "euangelion"; NRSV: "good news") always refers either to the act of preaching (1 Thess 1.5, NRSV: "our messages of the gospel") or its content (Acts 15.7, NRSV: "message of the good news"; 20.24, NRSV: "good news"). Outside the New Testament and other early Christian writings, the term was used for various happy announcements, such as a military victory, the birth of a son, or a wedding. An inscription from 9 BCE uses the noun (in the plural) to refer to the past event of the birth of the emperor Augustus: "the birthday of the god was for the world the beginning of 'joyful messages' which have gone forth because of him." The idea that an emperor's birth, coming of age, and ascent to the throne was "good news" for the world would have come to mind when Christian missionaries came preaching "good news." The noun is not used for a literary genre until the mid-second century CE (Justin Martyr, Dialogue with Trypho 10.2; Irenaeus, Against the Heresies 50.26.6).

The use of the word "gospel" in Mark's introduction presumably led to its being adopted as the designation for written accounts of the ministry, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Short formulas in Paul's letters show that the "good news" of the early mission focused on the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus (1 Thess 1.9-10; Rom 1.2-4; 1 Cor 15.3-5). Mark has expanded this to include Jesus' own preaching of the kingdom of God (Mk 1.14-15). So far as we know, Mark was the first to create a distinctive literary form by combining the church's preaching about Jesus (his words and deeds) with a narrative
account of Jesus' life and ministry. Writings that have been surmised to predate Mark are collections of sayings with little or no narrative framework.

By presenting a narrative about Jesus as the basis of Christian preaching (see Lk 1.1-4), the Gospel writers (evangelists) assume that the life of Jesus provides evidence for its claims. By providing an account of Jesus from his emergence on the public stage through his trial and death, Mark presents a "life" (Gk "bios") of his subject. The ancient "bios" should not be confused with a biography, which explicates the subject's origins, family, cultural influences, and character development, and tends to emphasize uniqueness and individuality. Ancient writers often characterized persons as types, and the narratives of their lives reflected a view that individuals had fixed characters from birth rather than personalities that developed through living their life.

Even granting such differences, scholars disagree over the extent to which the Gospels follow conventions of ancient biography. Because it concerns a figure with a crucial place in the history of God's relationship with Israel, the story of Jesus is closer to Jewish accounts of Moses or a prophet like Elijah than to the typical Greco-Roman biographies of rulers and philosophers (e.g., Xenophon, Agesilaus; Isocrates, Evagoras; Tacitus, Agricola; or Lucian, Demonax), which had a wider scope, including an account of the preliminary education of the subject of the biography. Greco-Roman biographies were addressed to a social and literary elite, which may explain why the Gospels, addressed to a much broader audience, do not match them very closely. Philo's Life of Moses adopts a Hellenistic-style laudatory biography for a Jewish subject. Echoes of the life of Moses as related in Exodus and other Jewish sources appear in Matthew's version of the birth and infancy of Jesus (Mt 1-2).

Since the genre "biography" emerged from Greek historical writing, the question of whether or not the Gospels belong to this genre often involves a prior judgment concerning their historical plausibility. Scholars who reject biography as a description of the Gospels often overemphasize the ideological or legendary elements found in the
narratives. They prefer to read the Gospels as etiological legends that explain the emergence of a new religion or as ideological representations of the christology of particular early Christian communities. Such writings do not intend primarily to provide historical information about their subject. Rather, they operate like myths and symbols to support Christian beliefs and practices.

Second-century CE authors, on the other hand, both adherents of Christianity like Justin Martyr and opponents like Celsus, presumed that the evangelists intended to provided information. Justin Martyr's designation of the Gospels as "memoirs" (Gk "hypomnemata"; 1 Apology 1.67.3) suggests something less than the full literary biography, and something more like a gathering of notes about the subject and his teaching. This perception may have been enhanced by the fact that early Christians disseminated their writings using the codex (similar to a bound book) rather than the scroll. Though modern readers often think of the codex as a technological advance over the scroll, the ancients did not. Serious literary works were copied onto scrolls. Notes, primarily drafts, and all sorts of records were kept in codices. Thus their physical appearance would suggest to an ancient reader that the Gospels were something like educational handbooks or pamphlets, not examples of high literary art. Papias's comment that Mark is "not in order" (Eusebius, History of the Church 3.39.5) shows that even some Christian readers considered it an unfinished composition. Papias also noted that Matthew was a more polished work (Eusebius, History of the Church 3.39.16). Luke's prologue states that he intends to correct the deficiencies in earlier accounts (1.1-4). Such concerns indicate that Mark's earliest readers treated the Gospel as a rough life of Jesus. Such a biography invited the expansions in content and revisions of style that Matthew and Luke subsequently undertook.

The Sources of the Gospels

A historical genre does not necessarily guarantee historical accuracy or reliability. Nor did the evangelists or their first readers engage in historical analysis. Their aim was to confirm Christian faith (Lk 1.4; Jn 20.31). Scholars generally agree that the Gospels were written forty to
sixty years after the death of Jesus. They thus do not present an eyewitness or contemporary account of Jesus' life and teaching. Even the language has changed. Though Greek had become the common language used between groups whose primary languages were different in the eastern Roman Empire, and inscriptions and fragments of Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible show that Greek was used even among Jews within Judea, Jesus, his disciples, and the crowds would have spoken Aramaic. Despite scholarly efforts to detect an underlying Aramaic original for Mark or Matthew, it is probable that all the evangelists wrote in the common ("koine") Greek of their day. Further, the vast majority of Hebrew Bible citations in the New Testament follow the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (the Septuagint).

Large sections of Matthew, Mark, and Luke repeat the stories about and sayings of Jesus in nearly identical words. Hence these three Gospels are referred to as "Synoptic" Gospels (from Gk "synoptikos," "view together"). At the linguistic level, both Luke and Matthew improve on Markan style, smoothing out inelegant expressions and repetitions. Luke eliminates Markan parataxis (one short phrase following another without indicating how they are related) by employing balancing particles and subordinating clauses. Matthew follows Mark's outline, though the insertion of considerable sections of discourse material may obscure the relationship for the casual reader. Luke knows most of Mark but has no parallels to Mk 6.45-8.26; whether Luke has chosen to omit this section or has a different version of Mark remains unclear. Detailed analysis of the traditions shared by Matthew, Mark, and Luke provides strong support for the view that Mark was the earliest Gospel. But, given its rough, draft-like composition, both Matthew and Luke revised it extensively.

Further study of additional material shared by Matthew and Luke shows a number of close verbal parallels in passages such as the temptation of Jesus (Mt 4.2-11; Lk 4.2-13), the Beatitudes (Lk 6.20-23; Mt 5.3, 6, 4, 11-12), the parable of the lost sheep (Lk 15.4-7; Mt 18.12-14), and the LORD's Prayer (Lk 11.2-4; Mt 6.9-13). These parallels include various types of sayings, controversy stories, and parables. Scholars have hypothesized that a collection of such material must have been
circulating in the early churches, and have designated it with the symbol "Q," from the German "Quelle" ("source"). In 1945, a library of religious treatises in Coptic was discovered near Nag Hammadi in Egypt. They included just such a "sayings book," the *Gospel of Thomas*. Subsequently, saying from a variant tradition of this Gospel in Greek were identified among Greek papyri. The 'Gospel of Thomas' is not "Q": Some of its sayings and parables appear to have been taken from the Synoptic Gospels rather than from earlier oral tradition. But its discovery provides evidence that such sayings collections existed.

Scholars presume that the Gospel writers may have had other such notebook-like collections of items such as parables and miracle stories. Presumably additional items, such as genealogies, canticles, and other legends in the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke, were not created by the evangelists but come from earlier tradition. Similarly, some of the material found only in Matthew or in Luke is not likely to be the author's creation. There may also have been a pre-Markan narrative of the passion and death of Jesus; some scholars think that most of Mark's narrative came from such a source, while others maintain that there is no evidence for such an account. The origin of the story of Jesus' passion is unclear, and some details may have been based on biblical descriptions of the suffering righteous one.

While the Synoptic Gospels have a close relationship based on the literary relationships between them, the Fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John, presents a much greater puzzle. Its chronology of Jesus' ministry is quite different, as are many narrative details. Jesus spends three years preaching, during which he journeys between Galilee and Jerusalem. (In the Synoptic Gospels he visits Jerusalem only once, at the end of a ministry that apparently lasted less than a year.) The episode denouncing the sellers in the Temple, which enrages the religious authorities and leads to his death in the Synoptics, occurs near the beginning of the three-year ministry in John (Jn 2.13-22). John claims that Jesus' popularity with Jerusalem crowds after he dramatically restored Lazarus to life awakened political fears for the safety of the nation (Jn 11.45-57; 12.9-11). John's account of the passion also differs markedly: There is no agony; conscious of his unity with the Father and the cross as his exaltation and return to pre-existent glory, Jesus
controls all the events; he engages the Roman governor in ironic discussion of kingship; and John has a disciple-witness, a Jerusalemite, who does not flee with the others. Is this unnamed "disciple whom Jesus loved" (Jn 21.7, 20; cf. 19.26; 20.2) a symbolic creation of the Evangelist? Some scholars think so; others suggest that he was a historical individual, the source of much of the Fourth Gospel's unique tradition and theology, as the text alleges (19.35; 21.24). What led John to compose such a unique variant on an outline of Jesus' life that still has a recognizable similarity to Mark (and in some instances to Luke)? Some scholars would use the parallels as indications of a shorter sketch of Jesus' life known to both authors. Others suggest that the Gospels of Mark, and perhaps Luke, were already circulating in the Evangelist's area. He assumes that readers know some other account of Jesus' life and teaching, and formulates a different version of who Jesus is and what he taught based on the insight that Jesus of Nazareth was not just a miracle-worker, a prophet, or a charismatic Jewish teacher, but the incarnate Son of God. That claim constitutes the flash point between Jesus and the Jewish authorities throughout the narrative.

Readers may ask similar questions for each of the Synoptics. What are the special features in that Evangelist's presentation of Jesus and of those who follow Jesus? Each author has done more than compile a notebook of traditions about Jesus. Rather, each has shaped the narrative to emphasize particular features of Jesus and his teachings. Scholars often use those elements as clues about the church setting in which each Gospel was written.
Introduction

The Gospel of Matthew highlights the Jewish origin and identity of Jesus and his first followers more than any other piece of early Christian literature. In Matthew Jesus is God's anointed, or messiah, and the one who best envisions and interprets God's plan for God's people. Jesus is presented as a great teacher of Israel like Moses for the present age. Jesus speaks with wisdom and authority reminiscent of Moses, unlike the teachers of Matthew's day whom the author rejects (7.28-29; 23.2-3). The Gospel draws from Israel's history. Jesus' lineage is traced back to Abraham. The title of the Gospel is, "the account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (1.1). There is little mistaking here the Jewishness of the author, of Jesus, and the audience envisaged in the Gospel. The author frequently uses biblical quotations to explain and validate the actions of Jesus. Many of these are introduced with a phrase indicating the fulfillment of a prophecy (1.22; 2.15; 2.17; 2.23; 4.14; 8.17; 12.17; 13.35; 21.4; 27.9). The formula citations help to ground Matthew's story within the history and heroes of ancient Israel.

In Matthew Jesus presents an understanding of ancient history and recent events, of the Torah, and of the future as the proper path for Israel. This counsel is expressed, for example, in the parables unique to Matthew in chs 20-22 and 25 and in the Sermon on the Mount (chs 5-7). Some of Matthew's contemporaries, however, disagreed with his understanding of Jewish history and his claims about Jesus. For this reason Matthew is also the most contentious and polemical of the Gospels. There was a struggle for leadership and direction following 70 CE in Israel. Matthew's community or church was in the midst of that struggle. This tension is a defining feature of the Gospel. The central opponents in Matthew are the Pharisees. They are characterized hyperbolically as "hypocrites," and teachers who "lock people out of
the kingdom of heaven" (23.13, 23, 25). A contemporary of Matthew, the Jewish historian Josephus, provides another picture of the Pharisees (Ant. 13.297, 399-417). He says Pharisees were popular with the people. They were admired for being "the most accurate interpreters of the law." And they played a central role in the formation of rabbinic Judaism, a coalition that ultimately provided for the survival of Judaism after the fall of the Temple in Jerusalem. Pharisees also developed legal interpretations called "the traditions of the elders" which were not recorded in the law of Moses. In Matthew's day serious tensions developed between various Jewish groups over which laws and traditions would govern Israel.

It is no surprise then that in Matthew we find Jesus arguing about tradition and interpretation to an extent we do not find in other Gospels. Jesus explicitly takes up the argument about "the tradition of the elders" with the Pharisees in 15.1-20. He has similar disputes with Pharisees over sabbath observance (12.1-8), divorce (19.1-9), taxes (22.15-22), and the greatest commandment (22.34-40). The competition between Matthew's community formed around Jesus and the group represented by the Pharisees builds as the Gospel unfolds, culminating in ch 23. Here Jesus elaborates at length on the inadequacies of the Pharisees, their influence, and their actions.

The occasionally highly charged language in Matthew is best understood in terms of an inter-Jewish conflict and should be interpreted against the backdrop of the instability characteristic of first-century Palestine. Failure to appreciate this feature of the Gospel's setting has led at time to unfortunate misunderstandings of certain key Matthean texts. A prominent example is the passage known as the "cry of all the people," associated with the trial of Jesus and found only in Matthew 27.25. Some within the Christian tradition have mistakenly taken this passage to mean "the Jews" as a race should perpetually be held accountable for killing Jesus (when all supporting historical evidence holds that the Roman government put Jesus to death). In fact, read in the context of Matthew's post-70 CE setting, 27.25 emerges as a charge which, while caustic, is nevertheless typical of a people or group divided against itself, as was the case in Matthew's day. Polemical
passages in the Gospel should be understood within their proper social context and not as later Christian denunciations of all Jews.

This Gospel is a presentation of the life and teachings of Jesus intended for a particular community. Issues of local governance (18.6-20), ethics (chs 5-7), succession and leadership (16.18-20), how to handle conflict with opposing groups and authorities (17.15-21; 23.1-3), and how the community should face the future are examples of the advice given directly to Matthew's church. The author has written his story of Jesus mindful of the predicament and problems of his own community.

While the traditional place of origin for Matthew has been considered the city of Antioch in ancient western Syria, many now consider a southern Galilean city, Tiberias or Sepphoris, a more likely location for the writing of the Gospel. It was in Galilee that followers of a Pharisaic party and devoted Jewish followers of Jesus would have encountered and rivaled one another. The Gospel was written after the Gospel of Mark. All but sixty verses of the Gospel of Mark appear in Matthew. The author's modifications of Mark's story are easily identified. For example, Matthew's depiction of Jesus' disciples, of Jewish law, and of the community's relationship to those in power modify the earlier Gospel of Mark. Another major source used by Matthew is the collection of sayings of Jesus designated by scholars as "Q" (from the German word "Quelle," meaning "source"). Luke also used this source, as the many very close parallels found only in those two Gospels indicate.

Matthew was written following the first Jewish revolt against Rome and the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE by the Roman general and eventual emperor, Titus. This monumental historical event is most likely referred to in 21.43-44 and 22.7. In terms of Roman political history the Gospel belongs to the end of the Flavian dynasty or shortly thereafter. In terms of the social and religious developments in Israel, Matthew belongs to that fluid and uncertain period between the fall of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 and the emergence of rabbinic Judaism as the decisive force and voice in the land between 135 and 200 CE. Matthew's Gospel then dates from the last decade of the first century to the early second century.
[Matthew 1]
Jesus' place in Israel's genealogy

1 An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, 4 and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of King David.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, 7 and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph, 8 and Asaph the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, 9 and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, 10 and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josiah, 11 and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

12 And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, 13 and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, 14 and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, 15 and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.
Jesus' conception and birth

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. 20 But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
    and they shall name him Emmanuel;"
which means, "God is with us." 24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, 25 but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

[Matthew 2]
The birth of Jesus and Herod the Great

1 In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." 3 When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; 4 and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

6 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
    are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
    for from you shall come a ruler
    who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

7 Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. 8 Then he sent them to
Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." 9 When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The flight to Egypt and return

13 Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." 14 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

16 When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:
18 "A voice was heard in Ramah,
    wailing and loud lamentation,
    Rachel weeping for her children;
    she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

19 When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 20 "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." 21 Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was
afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. 23 There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

[Matthew 3]
Preparing the way

1 In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, 2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." 3 This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,
   "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
   'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'"
4 Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, 6 and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruit worthy of repentance. 9 Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 10 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 "I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."
Jesus' baptism

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. 14 John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. 16 And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

[Matthew 4]
Jesus and the devil

1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. 3 The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." 4 But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

5 Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; 9 and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." 10 Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"
11 Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

The beginning of Jesus' ministry

12 Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. 13 He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14 so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

15 "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles —

16 the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

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

18 As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. 19 And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him. 21 As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. 24 So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. 25 And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.
[Matthew 5]  
The Sermon on the Mount; the Beatitudes

1 When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

The disciple in the world

13 "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

14 "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. 15 No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way,
let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

**Jesus and the law**

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

21 "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. 26 Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.
31 "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a
certificate of divorce.' 32 But I say to you that anyone who divorces his
wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit
adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

33 "Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times,
'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to
the Lord.' 34 But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for
it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by
Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not swear by
your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let your
word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the
evil one.

38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for
a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone
strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; 40 and if anyone
wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; 41 and if
anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. 42 Give to
everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to
borrow from you.

Love and wholeness

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and
hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for
those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be children of your
Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good,
and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. 46 For if you
love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the
tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers and
sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles
do the same? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is
perfect.
[Matthew 6]
On justice and prayer

1 "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2 "So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

5 "And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 6 But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

7 "When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

The Lord's Prayer

9 "Pray then in this way:
   Our Father in heaven,
   hallowed be your name.
10 Your kingdom come.
    Your will be done,
    on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts,
    as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And do not bring us to the time of trial,
    but rescue us from the evil one.
14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; 15 but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Fasting

16 "And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Religion and possessions

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; 23 but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? 28 And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell
you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' 32 For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

34 "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

[Matthew 7]
Making judgments within the community

1 "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. 2 For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. 3 Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye.

6 "Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you.

Concluding the Sermon on the Mount

7 "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? 10 Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? 11 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to
your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

12 "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

13 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. 14 For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? 17 In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus you will know them by their fruits.

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' 23 Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers.'

24 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. 25 The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell — and great was its fall!"

28 Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, 29 for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.
[Matthew 8]
Deeds of power and discipleship

1 When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; 2 and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." 3 He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 Then Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

5 When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him 6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress." 7 And he said to him, "I will come and cure him." 8 The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." 10 When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. 11 I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, 12 while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13 And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour.

14 When Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever; 15 he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him. 16 That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. 17 This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."
18 Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. 19 A scribe then approached and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." 20 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." 21 Another of his disciples said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." 22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

23 And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. 24 A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. 25 And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" 26 And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. 27 They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

28 When he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met him. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. 29 Suddenly they shouted, "What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" 30 Now a large herd of swine was feeding at some distance from them. 31 The demons begged him, "If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." 32 And he said to them, "Go!" So they came out and entered the swine; and suddenly, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water. 33 The swineherds ran off, and on going into the town, they told the whole story about what had happened to the demoniacs. 34 Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood. [Matthew 9] 1 And after getting into a boat he crossed the sea and came to his own town.

[Matthew 9]
Acts of power and growing tension

2 And just then some people were carrying a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." 3 Then some of the scribes said to
themselves, "This man is blaspheming." 4 But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? 5 For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'? 6 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he then said to the paralytic — "Stand up, take your bed and go to your home." 7 And he stood up and went to his home. 8 When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

10 And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12 But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?" 15 And Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. 16 No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made. 17 Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

18 While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." 19 And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. 20 Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, 21 for she said
to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." 22 Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well. 23 When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, 24 he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. 25 But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. 26 And the report of this spread throughout that district.

27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" 28 When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." 29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you." 30 And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, "See that no one knows of this." 31 But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district.

32 After they had gone away, a demoniac who was mute was brought to him. 33 And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke; and the crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel." 34 But the Pharisees said, "By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons."

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38 therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

[Matthew 10]
Matthew's sending and instruction about mission

1 Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. 2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first,
Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 6 As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' 7 Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. 9 Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. 11 Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. 12 As you enter the house, greet it. 13 If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. 15 Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

16 "See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. 17 Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; 18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. 19 When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; 20 for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. 21 Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; 22 and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

24 "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; 25 it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like
the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

26 "So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. 27 What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. 28 Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 And even the hairs of your head are all counted. 31 So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

32 "Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; 33 but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. 34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 and one's foes will be members of one's own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; 38 and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

40 "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcome the one who sent me. 41 Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; 42 and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple — truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."
[Matthew 11]
Jesus and John the Baptist

1 Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and proclaim his message in their cities.

2 When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples 3 and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" 4 Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5 the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. 6 And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

7 As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 8 What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John came; 14 and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15 Let anyone with ears listen!

16 "But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,
17 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.'
18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; 19 the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."
Denunciation and true discipleship

20 Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent. 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades. For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I tell you that on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you."

25 At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; 26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 27 All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

28 "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

[Matthew 12]
Jesus and the Pharisees; sabbath laws

1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. 2 When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath." 3 He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? 4 He entered the house of God and ate the bread of the
Presence, which it was not lawful for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests. 5 Or have you not read in the law that on the sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and yet are guiltless? 6 I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. 7 But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. 8 For the Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."

A sabbath healing

9 He left that place and entered their synagogue; 10 a man was there with a withered hand, and they asked him, "Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath?" so that they might accuse him. 11 He said to them, "Suppose one of you has only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath; will you not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12 How much more valuable is a human being than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath." 13 Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was restored, as sound as the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

Justice and healing for many

15 When Jesus became aware of this, he departed. Many crowds followed him, and he cured all of them, 16 and he ordered them not to make him known. 17 This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah:
18 "Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased.
I will put my Spirit upon him,
and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
19 He will not wrangle or cry aloud,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.
20 He will not break a bruised reed
or quench a smoldering wick
until he brings justice to victory.
21 And in his name the Gentiles will hope."
The relationship between words and deeds

22 Then they brought to him a demoniac who was blind and mute; and he cured him, so that the one who had been mute could speak and see. 23 All the crowds were amazed and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" 24 But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons." 25 He knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? 27 If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. 29 Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered. 30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. 31 Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

33 "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure. 36 I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."
Seeking a sign

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." 39 But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. 41 The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! 42 The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!

43 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but it finds none. 44 Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So will it be also with this evil generation."

Jesus' true family

46 While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. 47 Someone told him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." 48 But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 And pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."
Teaching in parables

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. 6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 Let anyone with ears listen!"

10 Then the disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" 11 He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 13 The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.' 14 With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says:

'You will indeed listen, but never understand,
and you will indeed look, but never perceive.
15 For this people's heart has grown dull,
and their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes;
so that they might not look with their eyes,
and listen with their ears,
and understand with their heart and turn —
and I would heal them.'

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. 17 Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.
18 "Hear then the parable of the sower. 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. 20 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. 22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. 23 But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

24 He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; 25 but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. 26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. 27 And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' 28 He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' 29 But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. 30 Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

31 He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; 32 it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

33 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."
34 Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. 35 This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:
   "I will open my mouth to speak in parables;
   I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world."

36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." 37 He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; 38 the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, 42 and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; 46 on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; 48 when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
51 "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." 52 And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old." 53 When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place.

Jesus' rejection in Nazareth

54 He came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power? 55 Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? 56 And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?" 57 And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and in their own house." 58 And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.

[Matthew 14]
The death of John the Baptist

1 At that time Herod the ruler heard reports about Jesus; 2 and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead, and for this reason these powers are at work in him." 3 For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, 4 because John had been telling him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." 5 Though Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet. 6 But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company, and she pleased Herod 7 so much that he promised on oath to grant her whatever she might ask. 8 Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." 9 The king was grieved, yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he commanded it to be given; 10 he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. 11 The head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who brought it to her mother. 12 His disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus.
The miraculous feeding

13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. 15 When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." 16 Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." 17 They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." 18 And he said, "Bring them here to me." 19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. 21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus' dominion over nature

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. 25 And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

28 Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you
doubt?" 32 When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

34 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. 35 After the people of that place recognized him, they sent word throughout the region and brought all who were sick to him, 36 and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

[Matthew 15]
Conflict over tradition and authority

1 Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2 "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands before they eat." 3 He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? 4 For God said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.' 5 But you say that whoever tells father or mother, 'Whatever support you might have had from me is given to God,' then that person need not honor the father. 6 So, for the sake of your tradition, you make void the word of God. 7 You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said: 8 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; 9 in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.'"

10 Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: 11 it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." 12 Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" 13 He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." 15 But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." 16 Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth
enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? 18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. 19 For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. 20 These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."

The Canaanite woman and her daughter

21 Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." 23 But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." 24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." 26 He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." 27 She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Further healings

29 After Jesus had left that place, he passed along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the mountain, where he sat down. 30 Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them, 31 so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

The second feeding

32 Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way." 33 The disciples said to him, "Where are we to get enough bread in the desert to feed so great a crowd?" 34
Jesus asked them, "How many loaves have you?" They said, "Seven, and a few small fish." Then ordering the crowd to sit down on the ground, he took the seven loaves and the fish; and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all of them ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. Those who had eaten were four thousand men, besides women and children. After sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

**[Matthew 16]**

**Conflict with Pharisees and Sadducees**

1 The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test Jesus they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. 4 An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." Then he left them and went away.

5 When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. 6 Jesus said to them, "Watch out, and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." They said to one another, "It is because we have brought no bread." 8 And becoming aware of it, Jesus said, "You of little faith, why are you talking about having no bread? 9 Do you still not perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? 10 Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? 11 How could you fail to perceive that I was not speaking about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!" Then they understood that he had not told them to beware of the yeast of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.
Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Jesus' rebuke of Peter and the nature of discipleship

21 From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. 22 And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." 23 But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

27 "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. 28 Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."
Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

The importance of John the Baptist

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." And the disciples asked him, "Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" He replied, "Elijah is indeed coming and will restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but they did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.

Faith and acts of power

When they came to the crowd, a man came to him, knelt before him, and said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; he often falls into the fire and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him." Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him here to me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it
came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."

**Jesus' second prediction of betrayal and death**

22 As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands, 23 and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised." And they were greatly distressed.

**The question of taxes**

24 When they reached Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the temple tax?" 25 He said, "Yes, he does." And when he came home, Jesus spoke of it first, asking, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their children or from others?" 26 When Peter said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the children are free. 27 However, so that we do not give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin; take that and give it to them for you and me."

**[Matthew 18]**

The fourth discourse; the question about genuine greatness

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" 2 He called a child, whom he put among them, 3 and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.
6 "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes!

8 "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell of fire.

Life and relationships within the church

10 "Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven. 12 What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? 13 And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. 14 So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

15 "If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. 16 But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."
21 Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" 22 Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24 When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; 25 and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. 26 So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' 27 And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. 28 But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.' 29 Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' 30 But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. 31 When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. 32 Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. 33 Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' 34 And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. 35 So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

[Matthew 19]
Continued legal debate with some of the Pharisees

1 When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. 2 Large crowds followed him, and he cured them there.

3 Some Pharisees came to him, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?" 4 He answered, "Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning 'made
them male and female,' 5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave
his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall
become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh.
Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." 7 They
said to him, "Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of
dismissal and to divorce her?" 8 He said to them, "It was because you
were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives,
but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you, whoever
divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits
adultery."

10 His disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it
is better not to marry." 11 But he said to them, "Not everyone can
accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given. 12 For there
are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who
have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have
made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let
anyone accept this who can."

Questions pertaining to eternal life

13 Then little children were being brought to him in order that he
might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to
those who brought them; 14 but Jesus said, "Let the little children
come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the
kingdom of heaven belongs." 15 And he laid his hands on them and
went on his way.

16 Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed
must I do to have eternal life?" 17 And he said to him, "Why do you ask
me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to
enter into life, keep the commandments." 18 He said to him, "Which
ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; You shall not commit
adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; 19 Honor
your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as
yourself." 20 The young man said to him, "I have kept all these; what
do I still lack?" 21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell
your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have
treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” 22 When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

23 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." 25 When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, "Then who can be saved?" 26 But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

27 Then Peter said in reply, "Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?" 28 Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life. 30 But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

[Matthew 20]
The laborers in the vineyard

1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; 4 and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. 5 When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. 6 And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' 7 They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' 8 When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' 9 When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily
wage. 10 Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage. 11 And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, 12 saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' 13 But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? 14 Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' 16 So the last will be first, and the first will be last.'

Jesus anticipates his death and resurrection

17 While Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and said to them on the way, 18 "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; 19 then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised."

Service as greatness

20 Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. 21 And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." 22 But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." 23 He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

24 When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. 26 It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among
you must be your servant; 27 and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

**Seeking help from the Son of David**

29 As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. 30 There were two blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" 31 The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet; but they shouted even more loudly, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!" 32 Jesus stood still and called them, saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" 33 They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." 34 Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

**[Matthew 21]**

**Jesus' entry into Jerusalem**

1 When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." 4 This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

5 "Tell the daughter of Zion,
   Look, your king is coming to you,
   humble, and mounted on a donkey,
   and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; 7 they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. 8 A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. 9 The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!
   Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"
10 When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" 11 The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

**Jesus' confrontations in the Temple**

12 Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. 13 He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you are making it a den of robbers."

14 The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them. 15 But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became angry 16 and said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have prepared praise for yourself'?"

17 He left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

18 In the morning, when he returned to the city, he was hungry. 19 And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road, he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. Then he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the fig tree withered at once. 20 When the disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?" 21 Jesus answered them, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done. 22 Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive."

23 When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" 24 Jesus
said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 26 But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." 27 So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

Tax collectors, prostitutes, and the kingdom of God

28 "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' 29 He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. 30 The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

The parable of the wicked tenants

33 "Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. 34 When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. 35 But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. 37 Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' 39 So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. 40 Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" 41 They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the
vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures:
'The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the LORD's doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes'?"
43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. 44 The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls."

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. 46 They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

[Matthew 22]
The wedding feast

1 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.' 5 But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. 7 The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' 10 Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests."
11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, 12 and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 For many are called, but few are chosen."

A series of debates with the local leaders

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. 16 So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. 17 Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. 20 Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" 21 They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." 22 When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

23 The same day some Sadducees came to him, saying there is no resurrection; and they asked him a question, saying, 24 "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.' 25 Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died childless, leaving the widow to his brother. 26 The second did the same, so also the third, down to the seventh. 27 Last of all, the woman herself died. 28 In the resurrection, then, whose wife of the seven will she be? For all of them had married her."

29 Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 31 And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was
said to you by God, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is God not of the dead, but of the living.' 33 And when the crowd heard it, they were astounded at his teaching.

34 When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, 35 and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" 37 He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: 42 "What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." 43 He said to them, "How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,
44 'The Lord said to my Lord,  "Sit at my right hand,  until I put your enemies under your feet"'? 45 If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?" 46 No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

[Matthew 23]
The fifth discourse

1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, 2 "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; 3 therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. 4 They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. 5 They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. 6 They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, 7 and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi. 8 But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. 9 And call no
one your father on earth, for you have one Father — the one in heaven. 10 Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. 11 The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them. 15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.

16 "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath.' 17 You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred? 18 And you say, 'Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath.' 19 How blind you are! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20 So whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; 21 and whoever swears by the sanctuary, swears by it and by the one who dwells in it; 22 and whoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the one who is seated upon it.

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. 24 You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!

25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.
27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. 28 So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, 30 and you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' 31 Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors. 33 You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape being sentenced to hell? 34 Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, 35 so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. 36 Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.

37 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 38 See, your house is left to you, desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

[Matthew 24]
Eschatological discourse

1 As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. 2 Then he asked them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."

3 When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the
sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" 4 Jesus answered them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. 5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah!' and they will lead many astray. 6 And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places: 8 all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

9 "Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. 10 Then many will fall away, and they will betray one another and hate one another. 11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. 12 And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 And this good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come.

15 "So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand), 16 then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; 17 the one on the housetop must not go down to take what is in the house; 18 the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. 19 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. 21 For at that time there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. 22 And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. 23 Then if anyone says to you, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!' or 'There he is!' — do not believe it. 24 For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. 25 Take note, I have told you beforehand. 26 So, if they say to you, 'Look! He is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they say, 'Look! He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 28 Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.
29 "Immediately after the suffering of those days 
the sun will be darkened, 
and the moon will not give its light; 
the stars will fall from heaven, 
and the powers of heaven will be shaken.

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

32 "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes 
tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So 
also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the 
very gates. 34 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until 
all these things have taken place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, 
but my words will not pass away.

36 "But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of 
heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 37 For as the days of Noah 
were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For as in those days 
before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in 
marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, 39 and they knew 
nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be 
the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Then two will be in the field; one 
will be taken and one will be left. 41 Two women will be grinding meal 
together; one will be taken and one will be left. 42 Keep awake 
therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. 43 
But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part 
of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and 
would not have let his house be broken into. 44 Therefore you also 
must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

45 "Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom his master has put 
in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their allowance of 
food at the proper time? 46 Blessed is that slave whom his master will 
find at work when he arrives. 47 Truly I tell you, he will put that one in
charge of all his possessions. 48 But if that wicked slave says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' 49 and he begins to beat his fellow slaves, and eats and drinks with drunkards, 50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know. 51 He will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[Matthew 25]
The parable of the ten maidens

1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. 5 As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. 6 But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' 10 And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. 11 Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12 But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' 13 Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

The parable of the talents

14 "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; 15 to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. 17 In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. 18 But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20 Then the one
who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' 22 And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' 24 Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' 26 But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. 29 For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 30 As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The judgment

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, 33 and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. 34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35 for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' 37 Then the righteous
will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' 40 And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' 41 Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; 42 for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' 45 Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

[Matthew 26]
Approaching death and Judas's betrayal

1 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 2 "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

3 Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. 5 But they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

6 Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, 7 a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. 8 But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, "Why this waste? 9 For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor." 10 But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. 11 For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. 12
By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. 13 Truly I tell you, wherever this good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

14 Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15 and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver. 16 And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

Preparation for the Passover and the Last Supper

17 On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" 18 He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

20 When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; 21 and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." 22 And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" 23 He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." 25 Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" He replied, "You have said so."

26 While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

30 When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.
Temptation, betrayal, and desertion

31 Then Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

32 But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." 33 Peter said to him, "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you." 34 Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." 35 Peter said to him, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And so said all the disciples.

36 Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. 38 Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." 39 And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." 40 Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour?

41 Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42 Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." 43 Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. 44 So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. 45 Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. 48 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him." 49 At once he came up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. 50 Jesus
said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. 51 Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. 53 Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? 54 But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?" 55 At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. 56 But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Leveling charges against Jesus

57 Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. 58 But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. 59 Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, 60 but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward 61 and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'" 62 The high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?" 63 But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." 64 Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you,

From now on you will see the Son of Man
   seated at the right hand of Power
   and coming on the clouds of heaven."
65 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. 66 What is your verdict?" They answered, "He deserves death." 67 Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, 68 saying, "Prophesy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?"
Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

The trial of Jesus

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money." After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter's field as a place to bury foreigners. For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."
11 Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." 12 But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. 13 Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" 14 But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

15 Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. 16 At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. 17 So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" 18 For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. 19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." 20 Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. 21 The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." 22 Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" 23 Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

24 So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." 25 Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" 26 So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 30 They spat on him, and took the reed and struck
him on the head. 31 After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The crucifixion

32 As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. 33 And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), 34 they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. 35 And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; 36 then they sat down there and kept watch over him. 37 Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

38 Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads 40 and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." 41 In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, 42 "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" 44 The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

45 From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 46 And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 47 When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." 48 At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. 49 But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." 50 Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. 51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. 53 After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. 54 Now when
the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

The burial

55 Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. 56 Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

57 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. 58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59 So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth 60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

62 The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate 63 and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' 64 Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." 65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." 66 So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

[Matthew 28]
Empty tomb, appearance, and commission

1 After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2 And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His
appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4 For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. 5 But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." 8 So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

11 While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. 12 After the priests had assembled with the elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 telling them, "You must say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' 14 If this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." 15 So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told among the Jews to this day.

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

Modern readers often take the Gospel according to Mark as a story of Christian discipleship, but is much more than that. Mark is a story of conflict — or rather of multiple conflicts. That is why it is so exciting to read and why it has such a compelling message. In the dominant conflict that builds to a climax throughout the Gospel, Jesus' challenge to the high priestly rulers and their Roman imperial overlords escalates from his preaching and practice of the kingdom of God in the village gatherings of Galilee to his dramatic demonstration against the Temple and confrontational challenge to the rulers in Jerusalem. That results in his torturous crucifixion by the Romans as an insurrectionary. In Jesus' exorcisms, moreover, God is winning the struggle with Satan and the demonic "unclean spirits" that have taken possession of the people like an occupying Roman legion. Surprisingly, however, a conflict between Jesus and the very disciples he designates as representative of the renewed people of Israel also develops in the course of the story. Although Jesus teaches them the mystery of the kingdom, they persistently fail to understand what he is teaching and doing — that the "kingdom of heaven/god" is already here (in their hearts and minds), but not yet (among the people and society) — so much so that by the end they betray, deny, and desert him. By contrast with the misunderstanding and faithless disciples, women, who play an increasingly prominent role in Mark's story, serve as models of faithfulness.

The Gospel story unfolds in an escalating series of steps. After Jesus' baptism by John, he proclaims the kingdom of God and manifests its miraculous power in the village gatherings of Galilee as the renewal of Israel, over against the Jerusalem priestly establishment and its representatives, the scribes and the Pharisees (chs 1-3). In the first long speech of the Gospel, Jesus then teaches the mysterious plan of the
kingdom in parables to his disciples and others in the movement (4.1-34). Jesus continues his program of the renewal of Israel in a sustained program of sea crossings, exorcisms, healings, and wilderness feedings reminiscent of the activities of Moses and Elijah (the great prophets of the past who, respectively, founded and renewed Israel), along with continuing disputes with the scribes and Pharisees (4.35-8.21). In the next step of the story, one framed by healings of blind men that highlights the disciples' misunderstanding, Jesus repeatedly makes that, besides being a new prophet equal in significance to Moses and Elijah in his restoration of covenantal Israel, it is necessary that he carry out the agenda of a martyr-messiah of Israel who must be condemned by the rulers, be killed, and rise again (8.22-10.52). After his dramatic messianic entry into Jerusalem and his provocative prophetic condemnation of the Temple, Jesus confronts the Jerusalem priestly establishment and their representatives (chs 11-12). In a second major speech, Jesus warns the disciples about fanatical misinterpretation of the coming political struggles (ch 13). In the final section of the Gospel, following Jesus' last meal with the disciples and his betrayal and arrest by the rulers' posse, he is accused of treason, blasphemy, and insurrection, condemned, and turned over to Pilate, the Roman governor, who orders him executed by crucifixion (chs 14-15). The Gospel then ends abruptly with the story of the empty tomb and the women's fear (16.1-8). Because the Gospel presents a sustained narrative of escalating conflicts, it should be read as a whole so components are understood in their connection with the overall story.

The Gospel of Mark presents Jesus' preaching and manifestation of the kingdom of God as a decisive development in the history of Israel, not as the beginning of a new religion. Indeed, in this story religion is inseparable from the social, political, economic, even the physiological aspects of life. Throughout the Gospel, Jesus is portrayed and presented in terms of popular Israelite memories of the great prophets, especially Moses, who had led Israel's Exodus from subjection to alien rule in Egypt; Elijah, who had led the renewal of Israel in resistance to oppressive monarchs; and Jeremiah, who proclaimed God's judgment on the Temple and the rulers based there. At the beginning, in the middle, and especially toward the end, Mark also presents Jesus as a specially designated son of God, or king. Jesus, however, turns out to
be a messiah (anointed one) who is also a martyr, in contrast to the
disciples' expectations. And Jesus as both prophet and martyr-messiah
is pointedly distinguished from the expectations of elite, scribal culture
(see esp. 9.11-13; 12-35-37).

Although the Gospel is anonymous, an ancient tradition ascribes it to
John Mark (mentioned in Acts 12.12; 15.37), who is supposed to have
composed it at Rome as a summary of Peter's preaching (see 1 Pet 5.13).
Modern scholars, however, find little evidence to support this tradition.
Mark is by far the shortest of the four canonical Gospels and is
generally thought to be the earliest, and to have been used in the
composition of both Matthew and Luke. Because of the vague and
indefinite references to the destruction of Jerusalem in Mark 13
(contrast Mt 22.7; Lk 19.43), the Gospel is thought to have been
composed just prior to the widespread Jewish popular revolt that
began in 66 CE and the Roman reconquest and destruction of
Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 CE. The language of the Gospel is that
of common spoken Greek. Its style features rapid sequences of brief
and vivid concrete episodes linked simply by "and" or "and
immediately," often deleted in translation for less awkward reading in
English. The narrative often shifts from the past tense into the present
tense, enlivening the action. The contents of the Gospel consist mostly
of stories about Jesus' actions and disputes with scribes and Pharisees,
including some of Jesus' sayings, with two speeches (one mostly of
parables) that interrupt the rapid flow of episodes. Mark appears to
have drawn upon a rich variety of oral traditions of Jesus' actions and
teachings, including chains of miracle stories, sets of parables, and
stories of controversies with the Pharisees. The overall narrative weaves
several sequences of episodes together into a complex plot with several
interrelated themes and conflicts. In the earliest manuscripts, Mark
ends abruptly at 16.8. This (apparently original) open ending invites the
reader to continue the story of Jesus and the kingdom. In some later
manuscripts Mark's story was "completed" with resurrection
appearances of amalgamated elements from the other canonical
Gospels, to make it conform to their common pattern.
MARK 75

[Mark 1]
Preparing the way of the Lord

1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

John's baptism of repentance

2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
   "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
   who will prepare your way;
3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
   'Prepare the way of the Lord,
   make his paths straight,'"
4 John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism
   of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And people from the whole
   Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to
   him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their
   sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt
   around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 He proclaimed,
   "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not
   worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. 8 I have
   baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Jesus' baptism

9 In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized
   by John in the Jordan. 10 And just as he was coming up out of the
   water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a
doove on him. 11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the
   Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Jesus' tests and trials

12 And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. 13 He
   was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with
   the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.
Proclaiming and manifesting the kingdom of God as the renewal of Israel, over against the Jerusalem priestly rulers; Jesus' opening proclamation of the kingdom of God

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

Call of disciples

16 As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." 18 And immediately they left their nets and followed him. 19 As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. 20 Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Exorcism and teaching with authority

21 They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. 22 They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. 23 Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, 24 and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" 26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. 27 They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching — with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." 28 At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.
Healings and exorcisms

29 As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. 31 He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

32 That evening, at sundown, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered around the door. 34 And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

Summary of Jesus' activity

35 In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. 36 And Simon and his companions hunted for him. 37 When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." 38 He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." 39 And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Healing a leper

40 A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." 41 Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" 42 Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. 43 After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, 44 saying to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." 45 But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.
[Mark 2]
Healing paralysis and forgiveness of sins

1 When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. 2 So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. 3 Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4 And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? 9 Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'? 10 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he said to the paralytic — 11 "I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." 12 And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Eating with sinners

13 Jesus went out again beside the sea; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. 14 As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

15 And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples — for there were many who followed him. 16 When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 17 When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a
physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

Fasting

18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" 19 Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day.

21 "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."

The sabbath and hunger

23 One sabbath he was going through the grainfields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. 24 The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" 25 And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? 26 He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." 27 Then he said to them, "The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath; 28 so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath."

[Mark 3]
Healing on the sabbath

1 Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. 2 They watched him to see whether he would cure him
on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. 3 And he said to the 
man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." 4 Then he said to 
them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save 
life or to kill?" But they were silent. 5 He looked around at them with 
anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, 
"Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was 
restored. 6 The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the 
Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Summary of Jesus' activity

7 Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude 
from Galilee followed him; 8 hearing all that he was doing, they came 
to him in great numbers from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the 
Jordan, and the region around Tyre and Sidon. 9 He told his disciples to 
have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would 
not crush him; 10 for he had cured many, so that all who had diseases 
pressed upon him to touch him. 11 Whenever the unclean spirits saw 
him, they fell down before him and shouted, "You are the Son of 
God!" 12 But he sternly ordered them not to make him known.

Appointing the twelve

13 He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, 
and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve, whom he also 
named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the 
message, 15 and to have authority to cast out demons. 16 So he 
appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); 17 
James son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he 
gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); 18 and Andrew, 
and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James 
son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, 19 and 
Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Defeat of Satan and the new community

Then he went home; 20 and the crowd came together again, so that 
they could not even eat. 21 When his family heard it, they went out to
restrain him, for people were saying, "He has gone out of his mind." 22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." 23 And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. 27 But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

28 "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; 29 but whoever blasphemies against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" — 30 for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

31 Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you." 33 And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" 34 And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 35 Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

[Mark 4]
Teaching the mystery of the kingdom of God in parables

1 Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. 2 He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: 3 "Listen! A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. 6 And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no
grain. 8 Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." 9 And he said, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

10 When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables. 11 And he said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; 12 in order that 'they may indeed look, but not perceive,
   and may indeed listen, but not understand;
   so that they may not turn again and be forgiven.'"

13 And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables? 14 The sower sows the word. 15 These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. 16 And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: when they hear the word, they immediately receive it with joy. 17 But they have no root, and endure only for a while; then, when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. 18 And others are those sown among the thorns: these are the ones who hear the word, 19 but the cares of the world, and the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things come in and choke the word, and it yields nothing. 20 And these are the ones sown on the good soil: they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty and sixty and a hundredfold."

21 He said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand? 22 For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. 23 Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" 24 And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you. 25 For to those who have, more will be given; and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away."
26 He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, 27 and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. 28 The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. 29 But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

30 He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? 31 It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; 32 yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

33 With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; 34 he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Continuing the prophetic renewal of Israel (and other peoples) despite opposition and the disciples' misunderstanding; First sea crossing

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." 36 And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. 37 A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" 39 He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"
[Mark 5]
Exorcism of the demon whose name is "Legion"

1 They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. 2 And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. 3 He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; 4 for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. 5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. 6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; 7 and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." 8 For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!" 9 Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion; for we are many." 10 He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11 Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; 12 and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them." 13 So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.

14 The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. 15 They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. 16 Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. 17 Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood. 18 As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. 19 But Jesus refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you." 20 And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.
Healings of Jairus's daughter and hemorrhaging woman

21 When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. 22 Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet 23 and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." 24 So he went with him.

And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. 25 Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. 26 She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." 29 Immediately her hemorrhage stopped; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30 Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my clothes?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 He looked all around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease."

35 While he was still speaking, some people came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" 36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the leader of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only believe." 37 He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. 38 When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." 40 And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. 41 He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little
girl, get up!" 42 And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. 43 He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.

[Mark 6]
Rejection in his hometown

1 He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. 2 On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. 4 Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." 5 And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. 6 And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Commissioning the twelve

Then he went about among the villages teaching. 7 He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. 8 He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; 9 but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. 10 He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. 11 If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." 12 So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. 13 They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.
Herod's execution of John

14 King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." 15 But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." 16 But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

17 For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. 18 For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." 19 And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, 20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. 21 But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. 22 When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." 23 And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." 24 She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." 25 Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." 26 The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. 27 Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, 28 brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. 29 When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Wilderness feeding of five thousand

30 The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. 31 He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place
all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. 32 And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. 33 Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. 34 As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. 35 When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; 36 send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat." 37 But he answered them, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?" 38 And he said to them, "How many loaves have you? Go and see." When they had found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." 39 Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. 42 And all ate and were filled; 43 and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. 44 Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

Second sea crossing

45 Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After saying farewell to them, he went up on the mountain to pray.

47 When evening came, the boat was out on the sea, and he was alone on the land. 48 When he saw that they were straining at the oars against an adverse wind, he came towards them early in the morning, walking on the sea. He intended to pass them by. 49 But when they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost and cried out; 50 for they all saw him and were terrified. But immediately he spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." 51 Then he got into the boat with them and the wind ceased. And they were utterly
astounded, 52 for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened.

A summary passage

53 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. 54 When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, 55 and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 56 And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

[Mark 7]
Traditions of the elders vs. the commandment of God

1 Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, 2 they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. 3 (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; 4 and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) 5 So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" 6 He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me;
7 in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.'

8 You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

9 Then he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition! 10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.' 11 But you say that if anyone tells
father or mother, 'Whatever support you might have had from me is Corban' (that is, an offering to God) — 12 then you no longer permit doing anything for a father or mother, 13 thus making void the word of God through your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many things like this."

14 Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: 15 there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile."
17 When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. 18 He said to them, "Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, 19 since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) 20 And he said, "It is what comes out of a person that defiles. 21 For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, 22 adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. 23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

The Syrophoenician woman

24 From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, 25 but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. 26 Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophoenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." 28 But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." 29 Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go — the demon has left your daughter." 30 So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.
Healing the deaf

31 Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. 32 They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. 33 He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." 35 And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. 37 They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

[Mark 8]
Wilderness feeding of four thousand

1 In those days when there was again a great crowd without anything to eat, he called his disciples and said to them, 2 "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat. 3 If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way — and some of them have come from a great distance." 4 His disciples replied, "How can one feed these people with bread here in the desert?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven." 6 Then he ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute; and they distributed them to the crowd. 7 They had also a few small fish; and after blessing them, he ordered that these too should be distributed. 8 They ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. 9 Now there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away. 10 And immediately he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha.
No sign will be given

11 The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, asking him for a sign from heaven, to test him. 12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation." 13 And he left them, and getting into the boat again, he went across to the other side.

The disciples misunderstand

14 Now the disciples had forgotten to bring any bread; and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. 15 And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out — beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod." 16 They said to one another, "It is because we have no bread." 17 And becoming aware of it, Jesus said to them, "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? 18 Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear? And do you not remember? 19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?" They said to him, "Twelve." 20 "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?" And they said to him, "Seven." 21 Then he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

Jesus confirms and continues his prophetic role in the renewal of Israel while announcing his agenda as martyr-messiah to the misconceiving disciples; Healing of a blind man

22 They came to Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to him and begged him to touch him. 23 He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when he had put saliva on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked him, "Can you see anything?" 24 And the man looked up and said, "I can see people, but they look like trees, walking." 25 Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again; and he looked intently and his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. 26 Then he sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even go into the village."
Jesus' first announcement and Peter's misunderstanding

27 Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" 28 And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." 29 He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." 30 And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

31 Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

The cost of following Jesus

34 He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. 36 For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? 37 Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? 38 Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." [Mark 9] 1 And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power."

Transfiguration of Jesus

2 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, 3 and his clothes became dazzling white,
such as no one on earth could bleach them. 4 And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. 5 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 6 He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. 7 Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" 8 Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

**Correction of scribal teaching about Elijah**

9 As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. 10 So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean. 11 Then they asked him, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" 12 He said to them, "Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things. How then is it written about the Son of Man, that he is to go through many sufferings and be treated with contempt? 13 But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written about him."

**Healing of epileptic child**

14 When they came to the disciples, they saw a great crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them. 15 When the whole crowd saw him, they were immediately overcome with awe, and they ran forward to greet him. 16 He asked them, "What are you arguing about with them?" 17 Someone from the crowd answered him, "Teacher, I brought you my son; he has a spirit that makes him unable to speak; 18 and whenever it seizes him, it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, but they could not do so." 19 He answered them, "You faithless generation, how much longer must I be among you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him to me." 20 And they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. 21 Jesus asked the father, "How long has this been happening to him?"
And he said, "From childhood. 22 It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us." 23 Jesus said to him, "If you are able! — All things can be done for the one who believes." 24 Immediately the father of the child cried out, "I believe; help my unbelief!" 25 When Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You spirit that keeps this boy from speaking and hearing, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again!" 26 After crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse, so that most of them said, "He is dead." 27 But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he was able to stand. 28 When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" 29 He said to them, "This kind can come out only through prayer."

Second announcement and misunderstanding

30 They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; 31 for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." 32 But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

33 Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" 34 But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. 35 He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." 36 Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 37 "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

Unknown exorcist

38 John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following
us." 39 But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. 40 Whoever is not against us is for us. 41 For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

**Warning on discipline**

42 "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. 43 If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. 45 And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. 47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, 48 where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

49 "For everyone will be salted with fire. 50 Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another."

**[Mark 10]**

**Marriage and children in the kingdom**

1 He left that place and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan. And crowds again gathered around him; and, as was his custom, he again taught them.

2 Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" 3 He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" 4 They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." 5 But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. 6 But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 7 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and
be joined to his wife, 8 and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

10 Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11 He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

13 People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. 14 But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. 15 Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." 16 And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

**Egalitarian economic relations in the kingdom**

17 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" 20 He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." 21 Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." 22 When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." 26 They were greatly
astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

28 Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." 29 Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age — houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions — and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

Egalitarian social-political relations in the kingdom and the third announcement and misunderstanding

32 They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, 33 saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; 34 they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again."

35 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." 36 And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" 37 And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." 38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" 39 They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; 40 but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."
When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Healing of the blind Bartimaeus

They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Confronting the rulers and ruling institutions in Jerusalem; A messianic demonstration

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately.'" They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus
and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. 8 Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. 9 Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

"Hosanna!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

10 Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Prophetic demonstration against the Temple

12 On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see whether perhaps he would find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard it.

15 Then they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves; 16 and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. 17 He was teaching and saying, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers."

18 And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching. 19 And when evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

20 In the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. 21 Then Peter remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered." 22 Jesus answered
them, "Have faith in God. 23 Truly I tell you, if you say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and if you do not doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will come to pass, it will be done for you. 24 So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

25 "Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses."

Jesus' authority

27 Again they came to Jerusalem. As he was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to him 28 and said, "By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do them?" 29 Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one question; answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30 Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin? Answer me." 31 They argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 32 But shall we say, 'Of human origin'?" — they were afraid of the crowd, for all regarded John as truly a prophet. 33 So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

[Mark 12]
Parable in the vineyard

1 Then he began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watchtower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. 2 When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. 3 But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. 4 And again he sent another slave to them; this one they beat over the head and insulted. 5 Then he sent another, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed. 6 He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying,
'They will respect my son.' 7 But those tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 8 So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. 9 What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. 10 Have you not read this scripture: 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; 11 this was the LORD's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes'?" 12 When they realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowd. So they left him and went away.  

**Paying taxes to the emperor**  

13 Then they sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said. 14 And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? 15 Should we pay them, or should we not?" But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it." 16 And they brought one. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "The emperor's." 17 Jesus said to them, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were utterly amazed at him.  

**Dispute with the Sadducees**  

18 Some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, saying, 19 "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. 20 There were seven brothers; the first married and, when he died, left no children; 21 and the second married the widow and died, leaving no children; and the
third likewise; 22 none of the seven left children. Last of all the woman herself died. 23 In the resurrection whose wife will she be? For the seven had married her."

24 Jesus said to them, "Is not this the reason you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God? 25 For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 26 And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? 27 He is God not of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong."

**Love your neighbor**

28 One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; 30 you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." 32 Then the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that 'he is one, and besides him there is no other'; 33 and 'to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,' and 'to love one's neighbor as oneself,' — this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that no one dared to ask him any question.

**How can the messiah be David's son?**

35 While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, "How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David? 36 David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared,
'The Lord said to my Lord,  
"Sit at my right hand,  
until I put your enemies under your feet."'

37 David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?" And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.

**Beware of the scribes**

38 As he taught, he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, 39 and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! 40 They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

41 He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. 43 Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. 44 For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

[Mark 13]

**Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple**

1 As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!" 2 Then Jesus asked him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."

**Exhortation not to be distracted from the movement by distressing events**

3 When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, 4 "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to
be accomplished?") 5 Then Jesus began to say to them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. 6 Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. 7 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. 8 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

9 "As for yourselves, beware; for they will hand you over to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them. 10 And the good news must first be proclaimed to all nations. 11 When they bring you to trial and hand you over, do not worry beforehand about what you are to say; but say whatever is given you at that time, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12 Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; 13 and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

14 "But when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; 15 the one on the housetop must not go down or enter the house to take anything away; 16 the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. 17 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! 18 Pray that it may not be in winter. 19 For in those days there will be suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the creation that God created until now, no, and never will be. 20 And if the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he has cut short those days. 21 And if anyone says to you at that time, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!' or 'Look! There he is!' — do not believe it. 22 False messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. 23 But be alert; I have already told you everything.

24 "But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,
25 and the stars will be falling from heaven,
   and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.
26 Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great
   power and glory. 27 Then he will send out the angels, and gather his
   elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of
   heaven.

28 "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes
tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So
also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near,
at the very gates. 30 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away
until all these things have taken place. 31 Heaven and earth will pass
away, but my words will not pass away.

32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in
heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Beware, keep alert; for
you do not know when the time will come. 34 It is like a man going on
a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each
with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. 35
Therefore, keep awake — for you do not know when the master of the
house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at
dawn, 36 or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. 37
And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

[Mark 14]
Jesus' death as martyr-messiah

1 It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened
Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest
Jesus by stealth and kill him; 2 for they said, "Not during the festival, or
there may be a riot among the people."

Anointing for burial

3 While he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at
the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment
of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his
head. 4 But some were there who said to one another in anger, "Why
was the ointment wasted in this way? 5 For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor." And they scolded her. 6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. 7 For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. 8 She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. 9 Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

**Prediction of betrayal**

10 Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray him to them. 11 When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

**The Last Supper**

12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" 13 So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, 14 and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' 15 He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." 16 So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

17 When it was evening, he came with the twelve. 18 And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." 19 They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I?" 20 He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. 21 For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born."
22 While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." 23 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. 24 He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

Agony and betrayal in Gethsemane

26 When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 27 And Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters; for it is written,

'I will strike the shepherd,

and the sheep will be scattered.'

28 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." 29 Peter said to him, "Even though all become deserters, I will not." 30 Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." 31 But he said vehemently, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And all of them said the same.

32 They went to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. 34 And he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake." 35 And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." 37 He came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? 38 Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 39 And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. 40 And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him. 41 He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into
the hands of sinners. 42 Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

43 Immediately, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. 44 Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." 45 So when he came, he went up to him at once and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. 46 Then they laid hands on him and arrested him. 47 But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 48 Then Jesus said to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? 49 Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled." 50 All of them deserted him and fled.

51 A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, 52 but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

Jesus condemned by chief priests and council and Peter's denial

53 They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. 54 Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire. 55 Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. 56 For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. 57 Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, 58 "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'" 59 But even on this point their testimony did not agree. 60 Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?" 61 But he was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"
62 Jesus said, "I am; and
'you will see the Son of Man
seated at the right hand of the Power,'
and 'coming with the clouds of heaven.'"
63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "Why do we still need witnesses? 64 You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?"
All of them condemned him as deserving death. 65 Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, "Prophesy!"
The guards also took him over and beat him.

66 While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. 67 When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, "You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth." 68 But he denied it, saying, "I do not know or understand what you are talking about." And he went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. 69 And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." 70 But again he denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, "Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean." 71 But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know this man you are talking about." 72 At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

[Mark 15]
Jesus condemned by Pilate

1 As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. 2 Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." 3 Then the chief priests accused him of many things. 4 Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you." 5 But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.
Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. 7 Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. 8 So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. 9 Then he answered them, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" 10 For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. 12 Pilate spoke to them again, "Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?" 13 They shouted back, "Crucify him!" 14 Pilate asked them, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!" 15 So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

The crucifixion

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. 17 And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. 18 And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 19 They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. 20 After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

21 They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. 22 Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). 23 And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. 24 And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

25 It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. 26 The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." 27 And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. 29 Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three
days, 30 save yourself, and come down from the cross!" 31 In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. 32 Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

33 When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 34 At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" 35 When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." 36 And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." 37 Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. 38 And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. 39 Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

Jesus' burial

40 There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41 These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

42 When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 44 Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. 45 When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. 46 Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then
rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

[Mark 16]
The empty tomb, the call back to Galilee, and 'they were afraid'

1 When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?"
4 When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 6 But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." 8 So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Two attempts to provide a more satisfactory ending to the Gospel of Mark

THE SHORTER ENDING OF MARK

[[And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.]]

THE LONGER ENDING OF MARK

9 [[Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. 10 She went out and told those who had been with him, while they were

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mournings and weeping. 11 But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

12 After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. 13 And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

14 Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. 15 And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. 16 The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

Introduction

The third Gospel, traditionally called the Gospel according to Luke, forms a unique literary and theological contribution to the New Testament story of Jesus Christ. Jesus is presented in an elegantly and deliberately crafted account so that readers perceive him to be "the Lord," God's Son who is the universal savior of humanity. Jesus himself is shown to inaugurate a mission to all humankind as the kingdom of God draws near to the earthly lives of people in Jesus' very person and work. Luke's telling of Jesus' story present Jesus' coming among humanity — in birth, life, ministry, suffering, death, and resurrection — as a fulfillment of God's promises of salvation, which brings peace and wholeness of life in a decisive way. This saving event began the "final days" of God's dealings with humanity in anticipation of the "Last Day," "the Day of the Lord." Jesus himself and, in turn, his disciples call people to true repentance, which means a new relationship to God and to other beings in a manner of life that embodies God's will for human "being."

In recounting this story, Luke reveals the ability to write in different literary styles. The initial four verses of the book are a single Greek sentence that forms a highly stylized introductory statement typically found in ancient historiographical writings. The Greek is formal and refined in a fashion that would have been familiar to well-educated citizens of the Greco-Roman era. After this distinctive start, however, the storytelling shifts into a style of Greek reminiscent of the Septuagint (ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, with additional writings from Hellenistic Judaism). This Semitic-influenced form of Greek permeates the stories surrounding the birth and childhood of Jesus. Yet, the Septuagint-like style lightens into a more normal (and more typically secular) form of first-century Greek (called "koine") in the narrative that comprises the remainder of the Gospel.
When situations shift in the story, the language of the account varies appropriately to suit the locale and characters in the narrative. Luke's appreciation of stylistic variation in narrative communication is apparent from his skilled employment in this technique. Indeed, it seems that the Gospel itself captures and conveys the universal significance of the story of God's salvation in and through Jesus Christ in the variety of ways that Luke styles the story. Readers from different religious, ethnic, and social backgrounds would find one level or another of the overall account to which they could relate and, thereby, find a point of identity and entry into the story of Jesus Christ.

The oldest traditions of the Christian church identify Luke, a physician who was a traveling companion and coworker with Paul (Philem 1.24; Col 4.14), as the author of the Gospel and its sequel, The Acts of the Apostles. At times the tradition further identifies Luke as a Syrian from Antioch, but practically nothing else is remembered of the writer of the Third Gospel. The earliest of these traditions about the identity of the author are from the late second century, and scholarly analysis of the Gospel and Acts raises critical questions about the accuracy of the attribution of the writings to the doctor, Luke, who was Paul's associate. The strongest argument in favor of the validity of identifying Luke the physician as the author of the Gospel and Acts is the relative obscurity of this particular figure from early Christianity. Yet, even defenders of the traditional identity of Luke recognize difficulties with that understanding. In particular, Luke's familiarity with Judaism is extensive, though he seems to have more book-knowledge than practical experience with particular rituals and beliefs. Similarly, Luke recalls detailed information about Palestinian locations and practices, though readers encounter a tendency toward giving the story an urban aura rather than presenting the predominantly rural reality that Jesus would have known. Above all, Luke never mentions in Acts that Paul wrote letters, and his account of the Gospel is quite clearly dependent on other earlier writings, especially the Gospel of Mark. That Luke knew and used still other materials, both oral and written, in composing this Gospel is certain, if not demonstrable. In fact, Luke shares a body of material (probably written in form) with the author of the Gospel of Matthew that accounts for approximately one-fifth of the overall Gospel story. Scholars designate this common material as
"Q" (German "Quelle," meaning "source"). Whether Luke had further written sources for his unique recital of Jesus' birth, childhood, certain parables, and the materials peculiar to Luke's account of Jesus' passion and resurrection is debated and at present beyond final determination. Yet, Luke's concern with sources — with acknowledging and using them profitably — is clear from his prologue to the Gospel (1.1-4).

The time and place of the writing of this Gospel are uncertain. Tradition identifies Luke's account with both Antioch and Rome (where Acts comes to its end), but no firm tradition or record locates the precise time and place of composition. Almost any major urban center in the Mediterranean would make a suitable location for such a document to be written and read. As for the time of the writing, all one can say with certainty is that Luke wrote this account after Mark composed his Gospel. The typical suggestion of scholars that Luke wrote around 85 CE is plausible, though the Gospel could have been completed five to fifteen years earlier or even five to ten years later. The available evidence from antiquity does not make precision possible in either locating or dating the origin of Luke's narrative.

In broad strokes, Luke tells the same basic story that one reads in the other canonical Gospels: Jesus appears, ministers in Galilee, and moves to Judea and Jerusalem where he encounters deadly hostility that leads to his suffering, death, and resurrection. Yet, Luke's story of Jesus has logic and content that distinguish it among the four Gospels. The advent of Jesus in Judaism has a continuity and coherence with the history of Israel that presents it as the fulfillment of Israel's hopes. In Luke's remembrance of Jesus one finds the manifestation of divine compassion as Jesus reaches out to live and work among the marginal members of his society. Women, the less-than-pious, tax collectors, the poor, the sick, the oppressed, and even noble Pharisees are present and interact with Jesus more prominently in this account than in any other. As stated in Acts, "Jesus of Nazareth... went about doing good... for God was with him" (Acts 10.38). Both the coming of Jesus and his ministry of compassion are the direct results of God's anointing Jesus with the power of the Holy Spirit. That divine outpouring of the Spirit was neither unprecedented nor singular, however, for the same Spirit of God was active in the history of Israel, clearly present and active in
the Gospel account prior to the conception and birth of Jesus, and later present and active in the account in Acts of the Church at work among all the people of the known world.

The story told by Luke unfolds in a deliberate and seemingly logical way. The prologue prepares the readers for the significance of the story that follows, 1.1-4. The infancy and childhood of Jesus is told in a series of scenes that alternate with an account of the origins of John the Baptist; the result is that readers meet and understand the role of both these figures in God's bringing salvation to all humanity, though Jesus is clearly presented as the superior person in this arrangement (1.5-2.52). The adult Jesus prepares for his ministry through an encounter with the adult John (then, readers learn Jesus' genealogy) and he undergoes temptations by the devil (3.1-4.13); Jesus ministers in Galilee, provoking controversy, calling disciples, preaching, working miracles, teaching, commissioning the initial ministry of his followers, and dealing compassionately with the masses of people (4.14-9.50). Jesus and his followers journey to Jerusalem and he ministers along the way (9.51-19.27). Jesus enters Jerusalem, working in the Temple area and teaching about the future (19.28-21.38). Jesus directs the Last Supper, suffers, dies, and is buried (22.1-23.56), and Jesus' empty tomb is found before he appears to the disciples and then ascends to heaven (24.1-53).

Luke's narrative starts with a clear beginning, but one also containing anticipations of the full story that follows and declarations that make the significance of the whole story explicit. The narrative unfolds naturally. Events occur as results of prior occurrences, and initial incidents are told in such a way that they anticipate later developments in the narrative. Readers who become actively involved in Luke's account will find hints and signals that provoke questions and expectations that are later answered and met in the reading of the whole story. In general, wondering about the nature of salvation, the character of the kingdom of God, the reality of repentance, and the person and work of Jesus as the Lord — God's messiah, Son, and Savior — will lead readers to ask about the depths of the story that Luke is intent upon unveiling. Luke's primary concern is to inform the reader who Jesus of Nazareth was — and now, who he is as the suffering,
crucified Savior and the risen, exalted Lord. Furthermore, in the wake of Luke's purposeful presentation of the person and work of Jesus Christ, there is another dimension of the story that preserves and communicates Jesus' teaching about what it means to be his follower. Discipleship is a secondary theme that is closely related to the primary theme of Jesus' identity and significance. Discipleship, however, is sometimes a difficult dimension of the story for contemporary readers to grasp, for discipleship is a way of life as a member of the repentant and saved people of God. For Luke, one is not a disciple alone, but one finds profound personal significance in becoming one of the people of God who live as citizens of God's kingdom in a manner consistent with God's intentions for the life of all humanity as brought and taught, shown and known in Jesus Christ, God's Son, the universal Savior of humankind.

[Luke 1]
The prologue

1 Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, 3 I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

The infancy and childhood of Jesus; the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist

5 In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. 7 But they had no
children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

8 Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, 9 he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. 10 Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. 11 Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. 14 You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. 16 He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." 18 Zechariah said to the angel, "How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years." 19 The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 20 But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur."

21 Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah, and wondered at his delay in the sanctuary. 22 When he did come out, he could not speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept motioning to them and remained unable to speak. 23 When his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

24 After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she remained in seclusion. She said, 25 "This is what the Lord has done for me when he looked favorably on me and took away the disgrace I have endured among my people."
The annunciation of Jesus' birth

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, 27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." 29 But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. 33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Mary and Elizabeth

39 In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, 40 where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42 and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. 43 And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? 44 For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."
46 And Mary said,  
   "My soul magnifies the Lord,  
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
48 for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
     Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
     and holy is his name.  
50 His mercy is for those who fear him  
     from generation to generation.  
51 He has shown strength with his arm;  
     he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
     and lifted up the lowly;  
53 he has filled the hungry with good things,  
     and sent the rich away empty.  
54 He has helped his servant Israel,  
     in remembrance of his mercy,  
55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
     to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

56 And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

The birth and naming of John

57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son.  
58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. 60 But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." 61 They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." 62 Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. 63 He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. 64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. 65 Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill
country of Judea. 66 All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:
68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
   for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.
69 He has raised up a mighty savior for us
   in the house of his servant David,
70 as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
71 that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.
72 Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
   and has remembered his holy covenant,
73 the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
   to grant us 74 that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
   for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people
   by the forgiveness of their sins.
78 By the tender mercy of our God,
   the dawn from on high will break upon us,
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

80 The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

[Luke 2]
The birth of Jesus

1 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 All went to their own towns to be registered. 4 Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth
in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. 5 He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**Annunciation to shepherds and their visit**

8 In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11 to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17 When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**Jesus' circumcision and presentation**

21 After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.
22 When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), 24 and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27 Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

29 "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

30 And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed 35 so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed — and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

36 There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. 38 At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.
Jesus' childhood in Nazareth

39 When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Young Jesus in the Temple

41 Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. 43 When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. 44 Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." 49 He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he said to them. 51 Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.

[Luke 3]
Jesus' preparation for the ministry; the appearance of John the Baptist

1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, 2 during the high priesthood of Annas and
Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3 He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, 4 as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth;

6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

John's call to repentance

7 John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. 9 Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

John's direction to the crowd

10 And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" 11 In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." 12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" 13 He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." 14 Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

John's heralding of the messiah and his imprisonment by Herod

15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,
John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

18 So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. 19 But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, 20 added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

The genealogy of Jesus

23 Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work. He was the son (as was thought) of Joseph son of Heli, 24 son of Matthat, son of Levi, son of Melchi, son of Jannai, son of Joseph, 25 son of Mattathias, son of Amos, son of Nahum, son of Esli, son of Naggai, 26 son of Maath, son of Mattathias, son of Semein, son of Josech, son of Joda, 27 son of Joanan, son of Rhesa, son of Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, son of Neri, 28 son of Melchi, son of Addi, son of Cosam, son of Elmadam, son of Er, 29 son of Joshua, son of Eliezer, son of Jorim, son of Matthat, son of Levi, 30 son of Simeon, son of Judah, son of Joseph, son of Jonam, son of Eliakim, 31 son of Melea, son of Menna, son of Mattatha, son of Nathan, son of David, 32 son of Jesse, son of Obed, son of Boaz, son of Sala, son of Nahshon, 33 son of Amminadab, son of Admin, son of Arni, son of Hezron, son of Perez, son of Judah, 34 son of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, son of Terah, son of Nahor, 35 son of Serug, son of Reu, son of Peleg, son of Eber, son of Shelah, 36 son of Cainan, son of Arphaxad, son of Shem, son of Noah, son of Lamech, 37 son of Methuselah, son of Enoch, son of Jared, son
of Mahalaleel, son of Cainan, 38 son of Enos, son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God.

The temptation of Jesus

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, 2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. 3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." 4 Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

5 Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. 7 If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." 8 Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

9 Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, 10 for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' 11 and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" 12 Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 13 When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

The beginning of Jesus' ministry in Galilee

14 Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. 15 He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.
Jesus in Nazareth

16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,
19 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor."

20 And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." 22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

23 He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" 24 And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. 25 But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; 26 yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. 27 There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." 28 When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. 30 But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

Jesus in the synagogue at Capernaum

31 He went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was teaching them on the sabbath. 32 They were astounded at his teaching, because he spoke with authority. 33 In the synagogue there was a man who
had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice,
34 "Let us alone! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." 35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" When the demon had thrown him down before them, he came out of him without having done him any harm. 36 They were all amazed and kept saying to one another, "What kind of utterance is this? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and out they come!" 37 And a report about him began to reach every place in the region.

The healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law

38 After leaving the synagogue he entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked him about her. 39 Then he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she got up and began to serve them.

Healings and exorcisms at sunset

40 As the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various kinds of diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on each of them and cured them. 41 Demons also came out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Messiah.

Departure and further preaching in Galilee

42 At daybreak he departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowds were looking for him; and when they reached him, they wanted to prevent him from leaving them. 43 But he said to them, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose." 44 So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea.
[Luke 5]
The great catch of fish

1 Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, 2 he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." 5 Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." 6 When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" 9 For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." 11 When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

The healing of a leper

12 Once, when he was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." 13 Then Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, "I do choose. Be made clean." Immediately the leprosy left him. 14 And he ordered him to tell no one. "Go," he said, "and show yourself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded, make an offering for your cleansing, for a testimony to them." 15 But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. 16 But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray.
Healing and forgiveness of sins

17 One day, while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting near by (they had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem); and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. 18 Just then some men came, carrying a paralyzed man on a bed. They were trying to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; 19 but finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the middle of the crowd in front of Jesus. 20 When he saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you." 21 Then the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, "Who is this who is speaking blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 22 When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'? 24 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — he said to the one who was paralyzed — "I say to you, stand up and take your bed and go to your home." 25 Immediately he stood up before them, took what he had been lying on, and went to his home, glorifying God. 26 Amazement seized all of them, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen strange things today."

The call of Levi

27 After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." 28 And he got up, left everything, and followed him.

29 Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them. 30 The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" 31 Jesus answered, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; 32 I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance."
Debate about fasting

33 Then they said to him, "John's disciples, like the disciples of the Pharisees, frequently fast and pray, but your disciples eat and drink." 34 Jesus said to them, "You cannot make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you? 35 The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days." 36 He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment; otherwise the new will be torn, and the piece from the new will not match the old. 37 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. 38 But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. 39 And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, 'The old is good.'"

[Luke 6]
Eating and healing on the sabbath

1 One sabbath while Jesus was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked some heads of grain, rubbed them in their hands, and ate them. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" 3 Jesus answered, "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? 4 He entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and gave some to his companions?" 5 Then he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."

6 On another sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. 7 The scribes and the Pharisees watched him to see whether he would cure on the sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against him. 8 Even though he knew what they were thinking, he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come and stand here." He got up and stood there. 9 Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?" 10 After looking around at all of them, he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." He did
so, and his hand was restored. 11 But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Jesus' selection of the twelve

12 Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: 14 Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, 15 and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, 16 and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

The Sermon on the Mount

17 He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. 18 They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. 19 And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them.

The beatitudes

20 Then he looked up at his disciples and said:
   "Blessed are you who are poor,
    for yours is the kingdom of God.
21 "Blessed are you who are hungry now,
    for you will be filled.
   "Blessed are you who weep now,
    for you will laugh.

22 "Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. 23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.
The woes

24 "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.
25 "Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry.
"Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep.

26 "Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

The love of enemies

27 "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

On judging others

37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken
together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you
give will be the measure you get back."

39 He also told them a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind
person? Will not both fall into a pit? 40 A disciple is not above the
teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. 41
Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the
log in your own eye? 42 Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Friend,
let me take out the speck in your eye,' when you yourself do not see
the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your
own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your
neighbor's eye.

The sources of good and evil

43 "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good
fruit; 44 for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered
from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. 45 The good
person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the
evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the
abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

The wise and the foolish builders

46 "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I tell you? 47 I
will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words,
and acts on them. 48 That one is like a man building a house, who dug
deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river
burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been
well built. 49 But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who
built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river
burst against it, immediately it fell, and great was the ruin of that
house."
The centurion's slave

1 After Jesus had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. 2 A centurion there had a slave whom he valued highly, and who was ill and close to death. 3 When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his slave. 4 When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy of having you do this for him, 5 for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us." 6 And Jesus went with them, but when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to say to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; 7 therefore I did not presume to come to you. But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed. 8 For I also am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." 9 When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." 10 When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

The widow's son at Nain

11 Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. 12 As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. 13 When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." 14 Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" 15 The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. 16 Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has looked favorably on his people!" 17 This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.
Jesus and John the Baptist

18 The disciples of John reported all these things to him. So John summoned two of his disciples 19 and sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" 20 When the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?'" 21 Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind. 22 And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. 23 And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

24 When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 25 What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. 26 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 27 This is the one about whom it is written,  'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  who will prepare your way before you.' 28 I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." 29 (And all the people who heard this, including the tax collectors, acknowledged the justice of God, because they had been baptized with John's baptism. 30 But by refusing to be baptized by him, the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves.)

31 "To what then will I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? 32 They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,  'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not weep.'
33 For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon'; 34 the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' 35 Nevertheless, wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

**Simon the Pharisee, Jesus, and the woman with the ointment**

36 One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. 37 And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. 38 She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him — that she is a sinner." 40 Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "speak." 41 "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." 44 Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." 48 Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."
Jesus' tour and the ministering women

1 Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, 2 as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their resources.

Parable of the sower

4 When a great crowd gathered and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable: 5 "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. 6 Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. 7 Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. 8 Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold." As he said this, he called out, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

Jesus' explanation of parables

9 Then his disciples asked him what this parable meant. 10 He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but to others I speak in parables, so that 'looking they may not perceive, and listening they may not understand.'

Interpretation of the parable of the sower

11 "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away. 14 As for what fell among
the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. 15 But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.

**On obedient listening**

16 "No one after lighting a lamp hides it under a jar, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. 17 For nothing is hidden that will not be disclosed, nor is anything secret that will not become known and come to light. 18 Then pay attention to how you listen; for to those who have, more will be given; and from those who do not have, even what they seem to have will be taken away."

**Jesus' true relatives**

19 Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. 20 And he was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you." 21 But he said to them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

**Winds and water obey**

22 One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they put out, 23 and while they were sailing he fell asleep. A windstorm swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. 24 They went to him and woke him up, shouting, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he woke up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. 25 He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were afraid and amazed, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?"
The Gerasene demoniac

26 Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 As he stepped out on land, a man of the city who had demons met him. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he did not live in a house but in the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he fell down before him and shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me" — 29 for Jesus had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many times it had seized him; he was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the wilds.) 30 Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. 31 They begged him not to order them to go back into the abyss.

32 Now there on the hillside a large herd of swine was feeding; and the demons begged Jesus to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. 33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

34 When the swineherds saw what had happened, they ran off and told it in the city and in the country. 35 Then people came out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. 36 Those who had seen it told them how the one who had been possessed by demons had been healed. 37 Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them; for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. 38 The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." So he went away, proclaiming throughout the city how much Jesus had done for him.
Jairus's daughter and the hemorrhaging woman

40 Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. 41 Just then there came a man named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue. He fell at Jesus' feet and begged him to come to his house, 42 for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, who was dying.

As he went, the crowds pressed in on him. 43 Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years; and though she had spent all she had on physicians, no one could cure her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his clothes, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. 45 Then Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and press in on you." 46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; for I noticed that power had gone out from me." 47 When the woman saw that she could not remain hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. 48 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

49 While he was still speaking, someone came from the leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer." 50 When Jesus heard this, he replied, "Do not fear. Only believe, and she will be saved." 51 When he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him, except Peter, John, and James, and the child's father and mother. 52 They were all weeping and wailing for her; but he said, "Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping." 53 And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. 54 But he took her by the hand and called out, "Child, get up!" 55 Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. Then he directed them to give her something to eat. 56 Her parents were astounded; but he ordered them to tell no one what had happened.
[Luke 9]
Commissioning the twelve

1 Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. 3 He said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money — not even an extra tunic. 4 Whatever house you enter, stay there, and leave from there. 5 Wherever they do not welcome you, as you are leaving that town shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." 6 They departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere.

Herod's curiosity of Jesus

7 Now Herod the ruler heard about all that had taken place, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, 8 by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the ancient prophets had arisen. 9 Herod said, "John I beheaded; but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he tried to see him.

The apostles' return and the crowds' following Jesus

10 On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done. He took them with him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida. 11 When the crowds found out about it, they followed him; and he welcomed them, and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured.

Feeding the five thousand

12 The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a deserted place." 13 But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish — unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." 14 For there
were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each." 15 They did so and made them all sit down. 16 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. 17 And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

Peter's confession

18 Once when Jesus was praying alone, with only the disciples near him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" 19 They answered, "John the Baptist; but others, Elijah; and still others, that one of the ancient prophets has arisen." 20 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "The Messiah of God."

Jesus' command to silence and first prediction of his death

21 He sternly ordered and commanded them not to tell anyone, 22 saying, "The Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

The requirements of discipleship

23 Then he said to them all, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. 24 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it. 25 What does it profit them if they gain the whole world, but lose or forfeit themselves? 26 Those who are ashamed of me and of my words, of them the Son of Man will be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. 27 But truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."
The Transfiguration

28 Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. 30 Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. 31 They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. 33 Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" — not knowing what he said. 34 While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. 35 Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" 36 When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

Jesus heals an afflicted boy

37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. 38 Just then a man from the crowd shouted, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child. 39 Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him. 40 I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." 41 Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." 42 While he was coming, the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43 And all were astounded at the greatness of God.

A second prediction

While everyone was amazed at all that he was doing, he said to his disciples, 44 "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is
going to be betrayed into human hands." 45 But they did not understand this saying; its meaning was concealed from them, so that they could not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

**True greatness**

46 An argument arose among them as to which one of them was the greatest. 47 But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put it by his side, 48 and said to them, "Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest."

**The unknown exorcist**

49 John answered, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us." 50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not stop him; for whoever is not against you is for you."

**Jesus' journey to Jerusalem with his followers; Samaritans' rejection of Jesus**

51 When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. 52 And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; 53 but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. 54 When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" 55 But he turned and rebuked them. 56 Then they went on to another village.

**The demands of following Jesus**

57 As they were going along the road, someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." 58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." 59 To another he said, "Follow me." But he said,
"Lord, first let me go and bury my father." 60 But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." 61 Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." 62 Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

[Luke 10]
The mission of the seventy

1 After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. 2 He said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. 3 Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' 6 And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. 7 Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. 8 Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; 9 cure the sick who are there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10 But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 11 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.' 12 I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.

Woes to unrepentant cities

13 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But at the judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 15 And you, Capernaum,
will you be exalted to heaven?
   No, you will be brought down to Hades.

Jesus's interpretation of the mission

16 "Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me."

Return of the seventy

17 The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!" 18 He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. 19 See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. 20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

Jesus' thanksgiving to God

21 At that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. 22 All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Jesus' blessing of the disciples

23 Then turning to the disciples, Jesus said to them privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what you see! 24 For I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it."
A lawyer's question

25 Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" 27 He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." 28 And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."

Parable of the Good Samaritan

29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Martha and Mary

38 Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. 39 She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. 40 But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me." 41 But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted
by many things; 42 there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her."

[Luke 11]
The LORD's Prayer

1 He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." 2 He said to them, "When you pray, say:
   Father, hallowed be your name.
   Your kingdom come.
3 Give us each day our daily bread.
4 And forgive us our sins,
   for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.
   And do not bring us to the time of trial."

Teaching about persistence

5 And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; 6 for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' 7 And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' 8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

A parabolic admonition and assurance concerning prayer

9 "So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. 11 Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? 12 Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? 13 If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"
The Beelzebul controversy

14 Now he was casting out a demon that was mute; when the demon had gone out, the one who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were amazed. 15 But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons." 16 Others, to test him, kept demanding from him a sign from heaven. 17 But he knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself becomes a desert, and house falls on house. 18 If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? — for you say that I cast out the demons by Beelzebul. 19 Now if I cast out the demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your exorcists cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. 20 But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. 21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his castle, his property is safe. 22 But when one stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his plunder. 23 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

The return of the unclean spirits

24 "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' 25 When it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. 26 Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first."

True blessedness

27 While he was saying this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!" 28 But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!"
The sign of Jonah

29 When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation; it asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. 30 For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so the Son of Man will be to this generation. 31 The queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the people of this generation and condemn them, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here! 32 The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here!

Light and sight; the healthy eye

33 "No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar, but on the lampstand so that those who enter may see the light. 34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light; but if it is not healthy, your body is full of darkness. 35 Therefore consider whether the light in you is not darkness. 36 If then your whole body is full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be as full of light as when a lamp gives you light with its rays."

Sayings against Pharisees and lawyers

37 While he was speaking, a Pharisee invited him to dine with him; so he went in and took his place at the table. 38 The Pharisee was amazed to see that he did not first wash before dinner. 39 Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. 40 You fools! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also? 41 So give for alms those things that are within; and see, everything will be clean for you.

42 "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practiced, without neglecting the others. 43 Woe to you
Pharisees! For you love to have the seat of honor in the synagogues and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces. Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves, and people walk over them without realizing it."

One of the lawyers answered him, "Teacher, when you say these things, you insult us too." And he said, "Woe also to you lawyers! For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not lift a finger to ease them. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your ancestors killed. So you are witnesses and approve of the deeds of your ancestors; for they killed them, and you build their tombs. Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute,' so that this generation may be charged with the blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, it will be charged against this generation. Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering."

When he went outside, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile toward him and to cross-examine him about many things, lying in wait for him, to catch him in something he might say.

[Luke 12]
The yeast of the Pharisees; calls to fearless confession

Meanwhile, when the crowd gathered by the thousands, so that they trampled on one another, he began to speak first to his disciples, "Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, that is, their hypocrisy. Nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed from the housetops.
4 "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after
that can do nothing more. 5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him
who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you,
fear him! 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of
them is forgotten in God's sight. 7 But even the hairs of your head are
all counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many
sparrows.

Blaspheming the Holy Spirit; aid therefrom

8 "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others, the
Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; 9 but
whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of
God. 10 And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will
be forgiven; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not
be forgiven. 11 When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers,
and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend
yourselves or what you are to say; 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you
at that very hour what you ought to say."

Warning against greed; parable of the rich fool

13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to
divide the family inheritance with me." 14 But he said to him, "Friend,
who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" 15 And he said to
them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for
one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." 16 Then he
told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. 17
And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to
store my crops?' 18 Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my
barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my
goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up
for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' 20 But God said to him,
'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the
things you have prepared, whose will they be?' 21 So it is with those
who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."
Anxiety concerning life

22 He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! 25 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you — you of little faith! 29 And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. 30 For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

Treasure in heaven

32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Sayings on watchfulness and faithfulness

35 "Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; 36 be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. 37 Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. 38 If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.
39 "But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. 40 You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour."

41 Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for everyone?" 42 And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and prudent manager whom his master will put in charge of his slaves, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? 43 Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. 44 Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions. 45 But if that slave says to himself, 'My master is delayed in coming,' and if he begins to beat the other slaves, men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk, 46 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and put him with the unfaithful. 47 That slave who knew what his master wanted, but did not prepare himself or do what was wanted, will receive a severe beating. 48 But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating will receive a light beating. From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.

The controversial character of Jesus' mission

49 "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! 50 I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! 51 Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! 52 From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; 53 they will be divided:

- father against son
- and son against father,
- mother against daughter
- and daughter against mother,
- mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law
- and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."
Interpreting the times

54 He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain'; and so it happens. 55 And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. 56 You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

Settling with an accuser

57 "And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? 58 Thus, when you go with your accuser before a magistrate, on the way make an effort to settle the case, or you may be dragged before the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer throw you in prison. 59 I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny."

[Luke 13]
Parable of the unfruitful fig tree

1 At that very time there were some present who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 He asked them, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than all other Galileans? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as they did. 4 Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them — do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did."

6 Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. 7 So he said to the gardener, 'See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?' 8 He replied, 'Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig around it and put manure on it. 9 If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"
Healing of a crippled woman on the sabbath

10 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. 11 And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. 12 When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." 13 When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. 14 But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day." 15 But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? 16 And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?" 17 When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

Parable of the mustard seed

18 He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? 19 It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches."

Parable of the yeast

20 And again he said, "To what should I compare the kingdom of God? 21 It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

The necessity of discipline for salvation

22 Jesus went through one town and village after another, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. 23 Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter through the
narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able. 25 When once the owner of the house has got up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then in reply he will say to you, 'I do not know where you come from.' 26 Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' 27 But he will say, 'I do not know where you come from; go away from me, all you evildoers!' 28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out. 29 Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God. 30 Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

Report and reply concerning Herod; Jesus' lament over Jerusalem

31 At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." 32 He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. 33 Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' 34 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 35 See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

[Luke 14]
Healing of a man with edema on the sabbath

1 On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. 2 Just then, in front of him, there was a man who had edema (dropsy). 3 And Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, "Is it lawful to cure people on the sabbath, or not?" 4 But they were silent. So Jesus took him and healed him, and sent him away. 5 Then he said to them, "If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you
not immediately pull it out on a sabbath day?" 6 And they could not reply to this.

Parable on humility

7 When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. 8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; 9 and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. 11 For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

12 He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Parable of the great dinner

15 One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" 16 Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. 17 At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' 19 Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' 20 Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' 21 So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his
slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' 22 And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' 23 Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. 24 For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

The costs of discipleship

25 Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, 26 "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. 33 So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

Saying about salt

34 "Salt is good; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? 35 It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; they throw it away. Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

[Luke 15]
Parable of the lost sheep

1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."
So he told them this parable: 4 "Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? 5 When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' 7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Parable of the lost coin

8 "Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? 9 When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' 10 Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Parable of the lost prodigal son

11 Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. 13 A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16 He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17 But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' 20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and
put his arms around him and kissed him. 21 Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe — the best one — and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

25 "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27 He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' 28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 29 But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' 31 Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

[Luke 16]
Parable of the dishonest manager

1 Then Jesus said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. 2 So he summoned him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.' 3 Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.' 5 So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How
much do you owe my master?' 6 He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.' 7 Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?' He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.' 8 And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. 9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes.

**A series of sayings**

10 "Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. 11 If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? 13 No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

14 The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they ridiculed him. 15 So he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God.

16 "The law and the prophets were in effect until John came; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed, and everyone tries to enter it by force. 17 But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one stroke of a letter in the law to be dropped.

18 "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.
Parable of the rich man and Lazarus

19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. 24 He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.' 27 He said, 'Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father's house — 28 for I have five brothers — that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' 29 Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.' 30 He said, 'No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

[Luke 17]
The peril of causing temptation; sayings concerning forgiveness

1 Jesus said to his disciples, "Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to anyone by whom they come! 2 It would be better for you if a millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea than for you to cause one of these little ones to stumble. 3 Be on your guard! If another disciple sins, you must rebuke the offender, and if there is repentance, you must forgive. 4 And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, 'I repent,' you must forgive."
Saying concerning faith

5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" 6 The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

The obligation to obedience

7 "Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table'? 8 Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink'? 9 Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? 10 So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!"

The cleansing of ten lepers

11 On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, 13 they called out, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were made clean. 15 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. 16 He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. 17 Then Jesus asked, "Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they? 18 Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19 Then he said to him, "Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well."

The coming of the kingdom of God

20 Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered, "The kingdom of God is not coming
with things that can be observed; 21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you."

The day of the Son of Man

22 Then he said to the disciples, "The days are coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. 23 They will say to you, 'Look there!' or 'Look here!' Do not go, do not set off in pursuit. 24 For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. 25 But first he must endure much suffering and be rejected by this generation. 26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so too it will be in the days of the Son of Man. 27 They were eating and drinking, and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed all of them. 28 Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot: they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, 29 but on the day that Lot left Sodom, it rained fire and sulfur from heaven and destroyed all of them 30 — it will be like that on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. 31 On that day, anyone on the housetop who has belongings in the house must not come down to take them away; and likewise anyone in the field must not turn back. 32 Remember Lot's wife. 33 Those who try to make their life secure will lose it, but those who lose their life will keep it. 34 I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. 35 There will be two women grinding meal together; one will be taken and the other left." 37 Then they asked him, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather."

[Luke 18]
Parable of the unjust judge and the persistent widow

1 Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. 2 He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. 3 In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' 4 For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, 5 yet
because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.' 6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? 8 I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

Parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector

9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income.' 13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

Jesus and the little children

15 People were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. 16 But Jesus called for them and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. 17 Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it."

The rich ruler, wealth, and salvation

18 A certain ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 20 You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother.'" 21 He replied, "I have kept all these since my youth." 22 When Jesus heard
this, he said to him, "There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." 23 But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich. 24 Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! 25 Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

26 Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" 27 He replied, "What is impossible for mortals is possible for God."

28 Then Peter said, "Look, we have left our homes and followed you." 29 And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who will not get back very much more in this age, and in the age to come eternal life."

**Jesus' third prediction of his death**

31 Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. 32 For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. 33 After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again." 34 But they understood nothing about all these things; in fact, what he said was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

**Healing of a blind man**

35 As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. 36 When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. 37 They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." 38 Then he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 39 Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 40 Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, 41 "What do you want me to do for you?" He said,
"Lord, let me see again." 42 Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has saved you." 43 Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

[Luke 19]
Zacchaeus's salvation

1 He entered Jericho and was passing through it. 2 A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. 5 When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." 6 So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. 7 All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." 8 Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." 9 Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

Parable of the ten pounds

11 As they were listening to this, he went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. 12 So he said, "A nobleman went to a distant country to get royal power for himself and then return. 13 He summoned ten of his slaves, and gave them ten pounds, and said to them, 'Do business with these until I come back.' 14 But the citizens of his country hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We do not want this man to rule over us.' 15 When he returned, having received royal power, he ordered these slaves, to whom he had given the money, to be summoned so that he might find out what they had gained by trading. 16 The first came forward and said, 'Lord, your pound has made ten more pounds.' 17 He said to him, 'Well done, good
slave! Because you have been trustworthy in a very small thing, take charge of ten cities.' 18 Then the second came, saying, 'Lord, your pound has made five pounds.' 19 He said to him, 'And you, rule over five cities.' 20 Then the other came, saying, 'Lord, here is your pound. I wrapped it up in a piece of cloth, 21 for I was afraid of you, because you are a harsh man; you take what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 He said to him, 'I will judge you by your own words, you wicked slave! You knew, did you, that I was a harsh man, taking what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow? 23 Why then did you not put my money into the bank? Then when I returned, I could have collected it with interest.' 24 He said to the bystanders, 'Take the pound from him and give it to the one who has ten pounds.' 25 (And they said to him, 'Lord, he has ten pounds!') 26 'I tell you, to all those who have, more will be given; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 27 But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them — bring them here and slaughter them in my presence.'"

Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem

28 After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

The entry into Jerusalem

29 When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" 32 So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 They said, "The Lord needs it." 35 Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. 36 As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. 37 As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, 38 saying,
"Blessed is the king
who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven,
and glory in the highest heaven!"
39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." 40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

Weeping over Jerusalem

41 As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. 44 They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God."

Cleansing of the Temple

45 Then he entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling things there; 46 and he said, "It is written,
'My house shall be a house of prayer';
but you have made it a den of robbers."

The religious leaders' hostility toward Jesus

47 Every day he was teaching in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him; 48 but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were spellbound by what they heard.

[Luke 20]
Questioning Jesus' authority

1 One day, as he was teaching the people in the temple and telling the good news, the chief priests and the scribes came with the elders 2 and
said to him, "Tell us, by what authority are you doing these things? Who is it who gave you this authority?" 3 He answered them, "I will also ask you a question, and you tell me: 4 Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" 5 They discussed it with one another, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, 'Why did you not believe him?' 6 But if we say, 'Of human origin,' all the people will stone us; for they are convinced that John was a prophet." 7 So they answered that they did not know where it came from. 8 Then Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

Parable of the vineyard and tenants

9 He began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, and leased it to tenants, and went to another country for a long time. 10 When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants in order that they might give him his share of the produce of the vineyard; but the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11 Next he sent another slave; that one also they beat and insulted and sent away empty-handed. 12 And he sent still a third; this one also they wounded and threw out. 13 Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.' 14 But when the tenants saw him, they discussed it among themselves and said, 'This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance may be ours.' 15 So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16 He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When they heard this, they said, "Heaven forbid!" 17 But he looked at them and said, "What then does this text mean: 18 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone'? 19 Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls." When the scribes and chief priests realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to lay hands on him at that very hour, but they feared the people.
Paying taxes to the emperor

20 So they watched him and sent spies who pretended to be honest, in order to trap him by what he said, so as to hand him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor. 21 So they asked him, "Teacher, we know that you are right in what you say and teach, and you show deference to no one, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. 22 Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?"
23 But he perceived their craftiness and said to them, 24 "Show me a denarius. Whose head and whose title does it bear?" They said, "The emperor's." 25 He said to them, "Then give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." 26 And they were not able in the presence of the people to trap him by what he said; and being amazed by his answer, they became silent.

Question concerning resurrection

27 Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him 28 and asked him a question, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless; 30 then the second 31 and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless. 32 Finally the woman also died. 33 In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her."

34 Jesus said to them, "Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; 35 but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. 36 Indeed they cannot die anymore, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. 37 And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. 38 Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive." 39 Then some of the scribes answered, "Teacher, you have
spoken well." 40 For they no longer dared to ask him another question.

A question about David's son

41 Then he said to them, "How can they say that the Messiah is David's son? 42 For David himself says in the book of Psalms, 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, "until I make your enemies your footstool."' 43 David thus calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?"

Warning concerning the scribes

45 In the hearing of all the people he said to the disciples, 46 "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets. 47 They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."

[Luke 21]
The widow's offering

1 He looked up and saw rich people putting their gifts into the treasury; 2 he also saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. 3 He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; 4 for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on."

Foretelling the destruction of the Temple

5 When some were speaking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, 6 "As for these things that you see, the days will come when not one stone will be left upon another; all will be thrown down."
Sayings about end-time signs

7 They asked him, "Teacher, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?" 8 And he said, "Beware that you are not led astray; for many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and, 'The time is near!' Do not go after them.

9 "When you hear of wars and insurrections, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end will not follow immediately." 10 Then he said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; 11 there will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and plagues; and there will be dreadful portents and great signs from heaven.

Foretelling the persecution of the disciples

12 "But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. 13 This will give you an opportunity to testify. 14 So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; 15 for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. 16 You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. 17 You will be hated by all because of my name. 18 But not a hair of your head will perish. 19 By your endurance you will gain your souls.

The desolation of Jerusalem

20 "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. 21 Then those in Judea must flee to the mountains, and those inside the city must leave it, and those out in the country must not enter it; 22 for these are days of vengeance, as a fulfillment of all that is written. 23 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress on the earth and wrath against this people; 24 they will fall by the edge of the sword and be taken away as captives among all
nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The coming of the Son of Man

25 "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. 26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

The lesson of the fig tree

29 Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; 30 as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. 31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Admonition to alertness

34 "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, 35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Summary concerning Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem

37 Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. 38 And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple.
[Luke 22]
The Last Supper and Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem; the deadly conspiracy against Jesus

1 Now the festival of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was near. 2 The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to put Jesus to death, for they were afraid of the people.

3 Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve; 4 he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them. 5 They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money. 6 So he consented and began to look for an opportunity to betray him to them when no crowd was present.

Preparations for the Passover

7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it." 9 They asked him, "Where do you want us to make preparations for it?" 10 "Listen," he said to them, "when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters 11 and say to the owner of the house, 'The teacher asks you, "Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"' 12 He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there." 13 So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

The Last Supper; the foretelling of the betrayal

14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 Then he took a loaf of bread,
and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. 21 But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. 22 For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!" 23 Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

True discipleship

24 A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. 25 But he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. 27 For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. 28 "You are those who have stood by me in my trials; 29 and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom, 30 so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The foretelling of Peter's denial

31 "Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, 32 but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." 33 And he said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!" 34 Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me."

Sayings about the coming crisis

35 He said to them, "When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "No, not a thing." 36 He said to them, "But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and
likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one. 37 For I tell you, this scripture must be fulfilled in me, 'And he was counted among the lawless'; and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled." 38 They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." He replied, "It is enough."

Jesus' prayer on the Mount of Olives

39 He came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him. 40 When he reached the place, he said to them, "Pray that you may not come into the time of trial." 41 Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done." [43 Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. 44 In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.] 45 When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, 46 and he said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial."

The betrayal and arrest of Jesus

47 While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; 48 but Jesus said to him, "Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?" 49 When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked, "Lord, should we strike with the sword?" 50 Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus said, "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him. 52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit? 53 When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!"
Peter's denials

54 Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. But Peter was following at a distance. 55 When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. 56 Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said, "This man also was with him." 57 But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." 58 A little later someone else, on seeing him, said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" 59 Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, "Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about!" At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." 62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

The mockery of Jesus

63 Now the men who were holding Jesus began to mock him and beat him; 64 they also blindfolded him and kept asking him, "Prophesy! Who is it that struck you?" 65 They kept heaping many other insults on him.

Jesus before the council

66 When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council. 67 They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us." He replied, "If I tell you, you will not believe; 68 and if I question you, you will not answer. 69 But from now on on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." 70 All of them asked, "Are you, then, the Son of God?" He said to them, "You say that I am." 71 Then they said, "What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!"
[Luke 23]
Jesus before Pilate

1 Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. 2 They began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king." 3 Then Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He answered, "You say so." 4 Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no basis for an accusation against this man." 5 But they were insistent and said, "He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place."

Jesus before Herod

6 When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. 7 And when he learned that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. 8 When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. 9 He questioned him at some length, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10 The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. 11 Even Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him, and sent him back to Pilate. 12 That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies.

Pilate's declaration of Jesus' innocence

13 Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, 14 and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. 15 Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. 16 I will therefore have him flogged and release him."
The sentencing of Jesus to death

18 Then they all shouted out together, "Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!" 19 (This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder.) 20 Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; 21 but they kept shouting, "Crucify, crucify him!" 22 A third time he said to them, "Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him." 23 But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. 24 So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. 25 He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished.

On the way to the cross

26 As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. 27 A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. 28 But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For the days are surely coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' 30 Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' 31 For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Jesus' exchange with the two criminals; the scene of the crucifixion

32 Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. 33 When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. 34 Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots to divide his clothing. 35 And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is
the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" 36 The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" 38 There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews."

39 One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." 42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." 43 He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

The death and burial of Jesus

44 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, 45 while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. 46 Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he breathed his last. 47 When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent." 48 And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. 49 But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

50 Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, 51 had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. 52 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. 54 It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. 55 The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. 56 Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments.
On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

[Luke 24]
The empty tomb and the resurrection; the women at the tomb

1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they went in, they did not find the body. 4 While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. 5 The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. 6 Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." 8 Then they remembered his words, 9 and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. 12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

The Emmaus incident

13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" 19 He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21 But we had
hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. 22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23 and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." 25 Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

**Jesus' appearance to his disciples**

36 While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 While in their joy they were disbelieving and still
wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate in their presence.

**Jesus' final words and withdrawal into heaven**

44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you — that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

50 Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. 51 While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; 53 and they were continually in the temple blessing God.
Introduction

The prologue of the Fourth Gospel (1.1-18), long recognized as the introduction to and summary of the Gospel's main concerns and emphases, takes pains not only to acknowledge Jesus as a human being, but as a social being as well when it proclaims, "The Word became flesh and lived among us" (1.14). Any effort to understand the Fourth Gospel must take this central pronouncement as a major point of interpretive entry. For although it speaks in a mystical tone that is meant to convey the unique relationship to God and solitary grandeur of the person of Jesus, the Fourth Gospel treats with equal gravity the "fleshly" nature of Jesus as it critiques the social relations and structures of the world that Jesus confronts. Thus even as it presents Jesus as the incarnate Word of God, the Fourth Gospel is also the story of Jesus as flesh and blood. Indeed, a careful reading reveals its focus to be precisely the doings of "flesh" in the "world" (1.10), that is, the activities of Jesus and the individual and collective responses to them.

In telling the story of Jesus the author symbolically uses a number of terms drawn from common experience — bread, water, light, life, word, shepherd, door, way — to make the significance of Jesus both clear and gripping. After the prologue (1.1-1.18), the Gospel presents the public ministry of Jesus as both the object of faith (1.19-4.54) and the object of persecution and unbelief (chs 5-12), depicts his ministry to the disciples in the upper room (chs 13-17), narrates his death and resurrection (chs 18-20), and concludes with an epilogue (ch 21). The following division is suggested by the Gospel itself: the prologue (1.1-1.18); the book of Jesus' signs that his is the revelation of the Father (1.19-12.50); the book of Jesus' glory as it is revealed through his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to those that accept him (13.1-20.31); the epilogue, which contains accounts of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances (21.1-25).
The major concerns of the Gospel are engendering faith in the person of Jesus (20.21) and discrediting the Temple-centered, hereditary religious authorities who present a collective obstacle to the acceptance of faith in Jesus (1.14; 9.22-23). Its attempts to engender faith in Jesus are seen in its presentation of him as the incarnate Word (1.1), the only begotten Son (3.16, 18), the messiah (1.41), the Holy One of God (6.69), the King of Israel (1.49), its portrayal of him as totally in control of his life as well as in his death (18.12; 19.30), and its use as a term of self-description the Greek phrase "ego eimi" ("I am") without a predicate, which is reminiscent of God's self-reference in Ex 3.14; Isa 41.4; 43.10; 46.4. Its concern to discredit the religious authorities, whom it calls "the Jews," is effectuated by portraying them as mercenary and uncaring shepherds (10.12-13), as haughty and condescending to the people (*7.15, 49; 9.34), as being more concerned with worldly acclaim than divine favor (12.43), and as betrayers of Jesus (11.53). In addition to its usage as cited above, in many instances its repeated use of "ego eimi" with a predicate contrasts Jesus with the religious authorities ("I am") or portrays him as replacing some aspect of established first-century Judaism. Even further, it presents him as embodying basic elements of the natural world, such as light (8.12) and life itself (11.25). This replacement or embodying motif is employed in other instances, such as the depiction of Jesus as replacing the Temple and the Passover (6.1-4), and serves to strengthen the Gospel's emphasis on the incarnation.

Although its scathing portrayal of "the Jews" has opened it to charges of anti-Semitism, a careful reading of the Gospel reveals "the Jews" to be a class designation, not a religious or ethnic grouping; rather than denoting adherents to Judaism in general, the term primarily refers to the hereditary Temple religious authorities. The Gospel further acknowledges their influential status by including among "the Jews" those who have accepted the worldview and class interests of the hereditary religious authorities as their own. This larger group includes the Pharisees (1.19, 24) and even the "crowd" of laypersons whose worth the religious authorities dismissed (7.49; cf. 6.22, 41). Thus the rejection and persecution of Jesus by "the Jews" is seen to be not only the result of what he says and does, but because his healings, his
pronouncements, and his earthly person lack the pedigree and imprimatur of the religious elite (7.15, 48-49; cf. 9.34).

Several factors in the Fourth Gospel's attention to detail in the story of the fleshly Jesus suggest that it incorporates a much earlier tradition. Current scholarly consensus dates the final editing of the Gospel in 80-90 CE. The bitter and combative tone with which the Gospel discredits "the Jews" and its angry demonizing of them, as in 8.44, for instance, indicates opposition to a dominant group with the power to determine who is to be accepted in the Jewish community by anathematizing and expelling from Judaism those who challenge the dominant group's authority (9.22; 12.42). The powerful Temple hierarchy, in effect, ceased to exist in 70 CE with the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. Moreover, the portrayal of Jesus as replacing the Temple may suggest that the Temple still stands as the center of Judaism (5.2), even as it repeats longstanding critiques of the Temple that prophesy its destruction (2.19; 4.21). Once the Temple and its hierarchy were no longer in existence, this polemic was transferred to local opponents of Christian believers. The "Jews" are equated with "the world" (16.1-4).

Finally, recent archaeological finds indicate that the Fourth Gospel contains accurate details about the Jerusalem Temple and its environs prior to 70 CE (e.g., 9.7; 10.22-23; 19.13). Together these factors suggest a possible alternate date for the earliest version of the Gospel material before 70 CE. Although the theological complexity and high christology, especially in chs 14-17, could indicate a longer period of theological gestation and symbolic development (and this is the view of most scholars), similarly developed views are found in such early New Testament writings as Paul's letter to the Romans. Although some scholars deny any dependence of the Fourth Gospel upon the Synoptic Gospels, most scholars accept the Fourth Gospel's dependence upon the Synoptics; at the least, they hold that its author was aware of them.

Who wrote this Gospel? Tradition says it was the apostle John. Scholarly opinion has long held that it was composed by a disciple of John who recorded his preaching. The epilogue speaks of an anonymous, loyal Jerusalem disciple of Jesus, called "the disciple whom
Jesus loved" (20.2; see 13.23; 19.26; 21.7,20), as the source of this unique understanding of Jesus.

[John 1]
The prologue

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") 16 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.
The testimony of John the Baptist

19 This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 20 He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." 21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." 22 Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23 He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"

as the prophet Isaiah said.

24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. 25 They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" 26 John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, 27 the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." 28 This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33 I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."

35 The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38 When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39 He said to
them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). 42 He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." 46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." 47 When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" 48 Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." 49 Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" 50 Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." 51 And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

[John 2]
The wedding at Cana

1 On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." 4 And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." 5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. 8 He
said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. 9 When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." 11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days.

The demonstration against corruption in the Temple

13 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 14 In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. 15 Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. 16 He told those who were selling the doves, "Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a marketplace!" 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me." 18 The Jews then said to him, "What sign can you show us for doing this?" 19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 The Jews then said, "This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" 21 But he was speaking of the temple of his body. 22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

23 When he was in Jerusalem during the Passover festival, many believed in his name because they saw the signs that he was doing. 24 But Jesus on his part would not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people 25 and needed no one to testify about anyone; for he himself knew what was in everyone.
[John 3]
Jesus and the religious authorities

1 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2 He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." 3 Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' 8 The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

11 "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. 18 Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than
light because their deeds were evil. 20 For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. 21 But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God."

Further testimony of John the Baptist

22 After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent some time there with them and baptized. 23 John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim because water was abundant there; and people kept coming and were being baptized 24 — John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison.

25 Now a discussion about purification arose between John's disciples and a Jew. 26 They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him." 27 John answered, "No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. 28 You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him.' 29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease."

31 The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks about earthly things. The one who comes from heaven is above all. 32 He testifies to what he has seen and heard, yet no one accepts his testimony. 33 Whoever has accepted his testimony has certified this, that God is true. 34 He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. 35 The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands. 36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God's wrath.
[John 4]
Jesus and the Samaritans

1 Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, "Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John" — although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized — 3 he left Judea and started back to Galilee. 4 But he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

7 A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." 8 (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." 11 The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? 12 Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" 13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." 15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." 17 The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" 19 The woman said to him, "Sir, I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for
salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you."

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."
Healing of the official's son

43 When the two days were over, he went from that place to Galilee (for Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honor in the prophet's own country). 45 When he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, since they had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the festival; for they too had gone to the festival.

46 Then he came again to Cana in Galilee where he had changed the water into wine. Now there was a royal official whose son lay ill in Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. 48 Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe." 49 The official said to him, "Sir, come down before my little boy dies." 50 Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way. 51 As he was going down, his slaves met him and told him that his child was alive. 52 So he asked them the hour when he began to recover, and they said to him, "Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him." 53 The father realized that this was the hour when Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he himself believed, along with his whole household. 54 Now this was the second sign that Jesus did after coming from Judea to Galilee.

[John 5]
Healing the lame man on the sabbath

1 After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. 3 In these lay many invalids — blind, lame, and paralyzed. 5 One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" 7 The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me." 8 Jesus said to him, "Stand up,
take your mat and walk." 9 At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Now that day was a sabbath. 10 So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, "It is the sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat." 11 But he answered them, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Take up your mat and walk.'" 12 They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take it up and walk'?" 13 Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there. 14 Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you." 15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. 16 Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath. 17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, and I also am working." 18 For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God.

Jesus' relation to God

19 Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. 20 The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished. 21 Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes. 22 The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. 24 Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.

25 "Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the
Son also to have life in himself; 27 and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not be astonished at this; for the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and will come out — those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

30 "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

Evidence of Jesus' relationship to God

31 "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. 32 There is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that his testimony to me is true. 33 You sent messengers to John, and he testified to the truth. 34 Not that I accept such human testimony, but I say these things so that you may be saved. 35 He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. 36 But I have a testimony greater than John's. The works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. 37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified on my behalf. You have never heard his voice or seen his form, 38 and you do not have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe him whom he has sent.

Jesus rebukes those who refuse his offer

39 "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. 40 Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. 41 I do not accept glory from human beings. 42 But I know that you do not have the love of God in you. 43 I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. 44 How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God? 45 Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope. 46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me,
for he wrote about me. 47 But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?"

[John 6]
Feeding the five thousand; Jesus replaces the Passover

1 After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. 2 A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. 3 Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. 4 Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. 5 When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" 6 He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. 7 Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." 8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 9 "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" 10 Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. 11 Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. 12 When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." 13 So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. 14 When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

15 When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

Jesus walks on the sea

16 When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, 17 got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 The sea became rough because a
strong wind was blowing. 19 When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. 20 But he said to them, "It is I; do not be afraid." 21 Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

Jesus, the bread of life

22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there. They also saw that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. 23 Then some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" 26 Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. 27 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." 28 Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." 30 So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? 31 Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. 36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. 37
Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; 38 for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day."

41 Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" 43 Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves. 44 No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. 46 Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. 47 Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" 53 So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; 55 for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. 56 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. 57 Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever." 59 He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.
60 When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?" 61 But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? 63 It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 But among you there are some who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. 65 And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father."

66 Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. 67 So Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." 70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? Yet one of you is a devil." 71 He was speaking of Judas son of Simon Iscariot, for he, though one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

[John 7]
The conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities escalates

1 After this Jesus went about in Galilee. He did not wish to go about in Judea because the Jews were looking for an opportunity to kill him. 2 Now the Jewish festival of Booths was near. 3 So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples also may see the works you are doing; 4 for no one who wants to be widely known acts in secret. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." 5 (For not even his brothers believed in him.) 6 Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. 7 The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify against it that its works are evil. 8 Go to the festival yourselves. I am not going to this festival, for my time has not yet fully come." 9 After saying this, he remained in Galilee.

10 But after his brothers had gone to the festival, then he also went, not publicly but as it were in secret. 11 The Jews were looking for him
at the festival and saying, "Where is he?" 12 And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds. While some were saying, "He is a good man," others were saying, "No, he is deceiving the crowd." 13 Yet no one would speak openly about him for fear of the Jews.

14 About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. 15 The Jews were astonished at it, saying, "How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?" 16 Then Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine but his who sent me. 17 Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. 18 Those who speak on their own seek their own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and there is nothing false in him.

19 "Did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why are you looking for an opportunity to kill me?" 20 The crowd answered, "You have a demon! Who is trying to kill you?" 21 Jesus answered them, "I performed one work, and all of you are astonished. Moses gave you circumcision (it is, of course, not from Moses, but from the patriarchs), and you circumcise a man on the sabbath. 23 If a man receives circumcision on the sabbath in order that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me because I healed a man's whole body on the sabbath? 24 Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

25 Now some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, "Is not this the man whom they are trying to kill? 26 And here he is, speaking openly, but they say nothing to him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Messiah? 27 Yet we know where this man is from; but when the Messiah comes, no one will know where he is from." 28 Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. 29 I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me." 30 Then they tried to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him, because his hour had not yet come. 31 Yet many in the crowd believed in him and were saying, "When the Messiah comes, will he do more signs than this man has done?"
32 The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering such things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent temple police to arrest him. 33 Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little while longer, and then I am going to him who sent me. 34 You will search for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come." 35 The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we will not find him? Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? 36 What does he mean by saying, 'You will search for me and you will not find me' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?"

37 On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, 38 and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" 39 Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

40 When they heard these words, some in the crowd said, "This is really the prophet." 41 Others said, "This is the Messiah." But some asked, "Surely the Messiah does not come from Galilee, does he? 42 Has not the scripture said that the Messiah is descended from David and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?" 43 So there was a division in the crowd because of him. 44 Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

45 Then the temple police went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why did you not arrest him?" 46 The police answered, "Never has anyone spoken like this!" 47 Then the Pharisees replied, "Surely you have not been deceived too, have you? 48 Has any one of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? 49 But this crowd, which does not know the law — they are accursed." 50 Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, 51 "Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?" 52 They replied, "Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee."
The woman caught in adultery

[[7:53 Then each of them went home, [John 8] 1 while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. 3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, 4 they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. 5 Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. 9 When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. 10 Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."
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Jesus the light of life

12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." 13 Then the Pharisees said to him, "You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid." 14 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge by human standards; I judge no one. 16 Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. 17 In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. 18 I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf." 19 Then they said to him, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." 20 He spoke these words while he was teaching
in the treasury of the temple, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

21 Again he said to them, "I am going away, and you will search for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come."
22 Then the Jews said, "Is he going to kill himself? Is that what he means by saying, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'?" 23 He said to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. 24 I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he." 25 They said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Why do I speak to you at all? 26 I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him." 27 They did not understand that he was speaking to them about the Father. 28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. 29 And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him." 30 As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." 33 They answered him, "We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, 'You will be made free'?"

34 Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. 35 The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. 36 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. 37 I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word. 38 I declare what I have seen in the Father's presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father."
39 They answered him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did, but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. 41 You are indeed doing what your father does." They said to him, "We are not illegitimate children; we have one father, God himself." 42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me. 43 Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word. 44 You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. 46 Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? 47 Whoever is from God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear them is that you are not from God."

48 The Jews answered him, "Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?" 49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. 50 Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is one who seeks it and he is the judge. 51 Very truly, I tell you, whoever keeps my word will never see death." 52 The Jews said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and so did the prophets; yet you say, 'Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.' 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets also died. Who do you claim to be?" 54 Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, 'He is our God,' though you do not know him. But I do know him; if I would say that I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I keep his word. 56 Your ancestor Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day; he saw it and was glad." 57 Then the Jews said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" 58 Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, before Abraham was, I am." 59 So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.
[John 9]
The healing of a man born blind

1 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, 7 saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. 8 The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" 9 Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." 10 But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." 12 They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 14 Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 15 Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." 16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. 17 So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight 19 and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20 His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him;
he is of age. He will speak for himself." 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." 25 He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." 26 They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" 28 Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." 30 The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34 They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." 37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." 38 He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. 39 Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.
[John 10]
Jesus, the shepherd who gives his life

1 "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. 2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

7 So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away — and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

19 Again the Jews were divided because of these words. 20 Many of them were saying, "He has a demon and is out of his mind. Why listen
to him?" 21 Others were saying, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

22 At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. 24 So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." 25 Jesus answered, "I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; 26 but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. 27 My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. 30 The Father and I are one."

31 The Jews took up stones again to stone him. 32 Jesus replied, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?" 33 The Jews answered, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God." 34 Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'? 35 If those to whom the word of God came were called 'gods' — and the scripture cannot be annulled — 36 can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, 'I am God's Son'? 37 If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me. 38 But if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." 39 Then they tried to arrest him again, but he escaped from their hands.

40 He went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had been baptized earlier, and he remained there. 41 Many came to him, and they were saying, "John performed no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true." 42 And many believed in him there.
[John 11]
The raising of Lazarus

1 Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. 3 So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." 4 But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." 5 Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, 6 after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

7 Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." 8 The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" 9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. 10 But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them." 11 After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." 12 The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." 13 Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. 14 Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15 For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." 16 Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the
resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they
die, will live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me will never
die. Do you believe this?” 27 She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that
you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

28 When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary,
and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” 29
And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. 30 Now
Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where
Martha had met him. 31 The Jews who were with her in the house,
consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her
because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there.
32 When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet
and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not
have died.” 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came
with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply
moved. 34 He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him,
“Lord, come and see.” 35 Jesus began to weep. 36 So the Jews said,
“See how he loved him!” 37 But some of them said, “Could not he who
opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

38 Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave,
and a stone was lying against it. 39 Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”
Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is
a stench because he has been dead four days.” 40 Jesus said to her,
“Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of
God?” 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and
said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. 42 I knew that you
always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing
here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” 43 When he had said
this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 The dead man
came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face
wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

45 Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen
what Jesus did, believed in him. 46 But some of them went to the
Pharisees and told them what he had done. 47 So the chief priests and
the Pharisees called a meeting of the council, and said, “What are we
to do? This man is performing many signs. 48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and destroy both our holy place and our nation." 49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all! 50 You do not understand that it is better for you to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed." 51 He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the dispersed children of God. 53 So from that day on they planned to put him to death.

54 Jesus therefore no longer walked about openly among the Jews, but went from there to a town called Ephraim in the region near the wilderness; and he remained there with the disciples.

55 Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover to purify themselves. 56 They were looking for Jesus and were asking one another as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? Surely he will not come to the festival, will he?" 57 Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who knew where Jesus was should let them know, so that they might arrest him.

[John 12]
The anointing at Bethany

1 Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 2 There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. 3 Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" 6 (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) 7 Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She
bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. 8 You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

9 When the great crowd of the Jews learned that he was there, they came not only because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death as well, 11 since it was on account of him that many of the Jews were deserting and were believing in Jesus.

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem

12 The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. 13 So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting,

"Hosanna!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord —  
the King of Israel!"

14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written:

"Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion.  
Look, your king is coming,  
sitting on a donkey's colt!"

16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him. 17 So the crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to testify. 18 It was also because they heard that he had performed this sign that the crowd went to meet him. 19 The Pharisees then said to one another, "You see, you can do nothing. Look, the world has gone after him!"

The conclusion of Jesus' public ministry

20 Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. 21 They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." 22 Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. 23 Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the
earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor.

27 "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say — 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour.

28 Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." 29 The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." 30 Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. 31 Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." 33 He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. 34 The crowd answered him, "We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?" 35 Jesus said to them, "The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light."

After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them. 37 Although he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in him. 38 This was to fulfill the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

"Lord, who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

39 And so they could not believe, because Isaiah also said,

"He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they might not look with their eyes, and understand with their heart and turn — and I would heal them."

41 Isaiah said this because he saw his glory and spoke about him. 42 Nevertheless many, even of the authorities, believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that they
would be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved human glory more than the glory that comes from God.

44 Then Jesus cried aloud: "Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. 45 And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. 46 I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness. 47 I do not judge anyone who hears my words and does not keep them, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge, 49 for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak. 50 And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I speak, therefore, I speak just as the Father has told me."

[John 13]
The footwashing and betrayal

1 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, 4 got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." 9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" 10 Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." 11 For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."
12 After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord — and you are right, for that is what I am. 14 So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. 16 Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. 17 If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. 18 I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' 19 I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. 20 Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me."

21 After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me." 22 The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. 23 One of his disciples — the one whom Jesus loved — was reclining next to him; 24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. 25 So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" 26 Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. 27 After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." 28 Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. 29 Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival"; or, that he should give something to the poor. 30 So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.

Jesus' farewell discourse and prayer

31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. 32 If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. 33 Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will
look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' 34 I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

36 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward." 37 Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." 38 Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times.

[John 14]
The believers' relation to the glorified Christ

1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. 4 And you know the way to the place where I am going." 5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" 6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." 9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. 12 Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than
these, because I am going to the Father. 13 I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

18 "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. 21 They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them." 22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. 24 Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

25 "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. 28 You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. 29 And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe. 30 I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me; 31 but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us be on our way.
[John 15]
The pattern of the believer's life

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. 2 He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. 3 You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. 9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

18 "If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. 19 If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world — therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'Servants are not greater than their master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word,
they will keep yours also. 21 But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 Whoever hates me hates my Father also. 24 If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 It was to fulfill the word that is written in their law, 'They hated me without a cause.'

26 "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. 27 You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

[John 16]
The believer's relation to the world

1 "I have said these things to you to keep you from stumbling. 2 They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God. 3 And they will do this because they have not known the Father or me. 4 But I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them.

"I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. 5 But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' 6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. 7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 about sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; 11 about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.
"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

"A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me." Then some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying to us, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'; and 'Because I am going to the Father'?” They said, "What does he mean by this 'a little while'? We do not know what he is talking about." Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, "Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, 'A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me'? Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy. When a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come. But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world. So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. On that day you will ask nothing of me. Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.

"I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father. On that day you will ask in my name. I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf; for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father."
29 His disciples said, "Yes, now you are speaking plainly, not in any figure of speech! 30 Now we know that you know all things, and do not need to have anyone question you; by this we believe that you came from God." 31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? 32 The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. 33 I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!"

[John 17]
Jesus' final prayer

1 After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4 I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. 5 So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

6 "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8 for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. 11 And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete
in themselves. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 15 I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. 16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

20 "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24 Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

25 "Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

[John 18]
Arrest, trial, crucifixion, and burial of Jesus

1 After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. 2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. 4 Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" 5 They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas,
who betrayed him, was standing with them. 6 When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground. 7 Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." 8 Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go." 9 This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me." 10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. 11 Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

12 So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. 13 First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. 14 Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

15 Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, 16 but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. 17 The woman said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not." 18 Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

19 Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. 20 Jesus answered, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. 21 Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said." 22 When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" 23 Jesus answered, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" 24 Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.
25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not." 26 One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" 27 Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

**Jesus and Pilate**

28 Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. 29 So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" 30 They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." 31 Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." 32 (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

33 Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" 34 Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" 35 Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" 36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." 37 Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." 38 Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him. 39 But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" 40 They shouted in reply, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a bandit.
[John 19]

1 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. 2 And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. 3 They kept coming up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and striking him on the face. 4 Pilate went out again and said to them, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him." 5 So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!" 6 When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him." 7 The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God."

8 Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. 9 He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 Pilate therefore said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin." 12 From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of the emperor. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against the emperor."

13 When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge's bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew Gabbatha. 14 Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover; and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, "Here is your King!" 15 They cried out, "Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!" Pilate asked them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but the emperor." 16 Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.
The crucifixion

So they took Jesus; 17 and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them. 19 Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." 20 Many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. 21 Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" 22 Pilate answered, "What I have written I have written." 23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. 24 So they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it." This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

"They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots."

25 And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

28 After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." 29 A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. 30 When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.
31 Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. 35 (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) 36 These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." 37 And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

38 After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. 39 Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. 40 They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. 41 Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. 42 And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

[John 20]
The resurrection

1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." 3 Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. 4 The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then
Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples returned to their homes.

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; 12 and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." 14 When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."
24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

[John 21]
Epilogue

1 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. 2 Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." 6 He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. 7 That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some
clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

9 When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

15 When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16 A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. 18 Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." 19 (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

20 Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" 21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!" 23 So the rumor spread in the community that this disciple would
not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"

24 This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true. 25 But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.
Introduction

The book of Acts tells a dramatic story of the birth and expansion of the church from the time of the ascension of Jesus until the arrival of Paul in Rome. Written from the perspective of the late first century CE, Acts alone among the documents of the earliest Christian period offers a narrative sequel to the accounts of Jesus' words and deeds found in the Gospels. Its author, identified by tradition as Luke, had already produced the Gospel (1.1-2). His purpose in writing again was more than a matter of antiquarian interest, although Acts can be appropriately compared with other Hellenistic historical monographs. The account was intended to imbue Christians of his day with an unshakable confidence in their future through a didactic survey of their past. In carrying out that overarching purpose, it addresses and tries to solve potential and actual social and theological problems brought about by the church's relationship to its Jewish heritage and its Roman cultural and political environment. Luke sought to clarify both how the church was faithful to the God of the Bible and how Christianity was not incompatible with citizenship in the Roman Empire. Luke also devotes considerable attention to Paul, constructing for Christians of a post-Pauline era an image of this important figure consistent with and supportive of the stance taken on Jewish and Roman concerns in the book.

As a title, Acts of the Apostles is clearly a misnomer, since Peter is the only apostle who receives individualized portrayal. Nevertheless, it does capture one of the key concepts of the book, namely, that the apostles guarantee continuity with Jesus through their status as witnesses to everything that happened during his ministry (1.21-22); this testimony applies above all to his resurrection (10.39-41). The plot line of Acts begins with the ascension of Jesus, and the narrative first portrays the life and dynamic growth of the primitive community in
Jerusalem, energized by the Spirit and led by Peter and the apostles up through the martyrdom of Stephen (chs 1-7). The persecution initiated upon Stephen's death results in mission activity outside Jerusalem highlighted by approaches to non-Jews (ch 8). After narrating the conversion of Saul/Paul (ch 9), Peter is represented as the individual through whom God establishes the inclusion of the Gentiles (10.1-11.18). Next the early missionary tour of Barnabas and Paul on behalf of Antioch is narrated (11.19-14.28), along with a story about Peter's miraculous escape from death (ch 12). The center of the book recounts the apostolic council's vindication of the efforts to free the Gentile mission from the requirements of Jewish ritual law (ch 15). Then Paul's further missionary travels are depicted (15.36-21.26) in Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Miletus, Caesarea, and Jerusalem. Finally, the book portrays Paul's arrest, imprisonment, and trials in Jerusalem and Caesarea, and his transfer to Rom (21.27-28.31), closing with the uplifting image of Paul, while under house arrest, preaching and teaching without hindrance in the capital city of the empire.

For Luke, who was most likely a Gentile Christian, the fact that God's promises in scripture had been made to the ancient people of God required that the church stand in continuity with Israel. But the experience of unbelief among Jews and the abandonment of ritual observance in the mission to the Gentiles threatened to compromise the integrity of this history. Luke responds by depicting the earliest Christians as faithful Jews in Jerusalem until persecution pushes them out. Then, by means of multiple elaborations of the Cornelius episode (10.1-48; 11.1-18; 15.7-9) and of the story of Paul's conversion (9.1-19; 22.4-16; 26.9-18), he stresses that the entrance of Gentiles into the church is nothing less than an act of God, and so by definition in continuity with Israel's history. Nevertheless, Luke's ideal Gentile convert is one who continues to practice Jewish piety (10.2), and Gentile Christians are urged to adhere to behavior that would permit association with Jews (15.20). Luke's portrayal of Paul's constant visits to synagogues and his Jewish lifestyle serve to reinforce this maintenance of continuity with Jewish roots.
One consequence of Luke's larger narrative goals is that his understanding of Paul stands in considerable tension with biographical and theological details in Paul's own letters. This raises doubts about the traditional identification of Luke as a companion of Paul. That connection was based on speculation centered on the appearance of Luke's name in Philem 24 and some letters attributed to Paul (Col 4.14; 2 Tim 4.11) in combination with certain "clues" found in the text of Acts. Irenaeus (ca. 130-200 CE) found in the so-called "we" passages (16.10-17; 20.5-15; 21.1-18; 27.1-28.16) proof that Luke was Paul's inseparable collaborator. But it is far from clear that these curious first-person plural passages reveal any firsthand knowledge of Paul on the part of the author. Indeed, to raise any one of the numerous difficulties, Luke's denial of the status "apostle" to Paul in Acts is a bit of literary license almost unimaginable for an actual companion of "Paul the apostle" (Gal 1.1).

It is reasonable to date Acts sometime after Luke's Gospel, which may be placed around 85-95 CE. Luke's geographical location is uncertain. Ancient tradition placed him in Antioch, but his obvious attachment to Paul and Pauline tradition could indicate his connection to one of the cities of the Pauline mission around the Aegean. Paul's image had already undergone revision by Luke's day (cf. the Pastoral epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), and Luke did not hesitate to portray Paul as subject to the law in line with his understanding of the continuity of the history of Israel and the church. Moreover, according to Luke it is not Paul's theological argument but the conversion of Cornelius through Peter, ratified by the apostolic council, that establishes the freedom of Gentile Christians from the law. Discrepancies between the Paul of Acts and the Paul of the epistles have long been recognized. Such contradictions arise because Acts preserves an image of Paul from a period several decades after his death. Paul's role in Acts is thus dictated not only by the biographical details of his life but also by the needs of Luke's theology.

Luke offers no guidance concerning the origins of the information upon which the narrative presented in Acts is based. He appears to have relied on a mixture of traditional information uncovered by his own investigation (cf. Lk 11.3) and his imagination of how the founding
events unfolded in Jerusalem. In line with the general practice of Hellenistic historians, Luke filled his narrative with speeches appropriate to significant occasions. These speeches, which amount to nearly one-third of the total text, are properly regarded as Luke's literary creations, inserted into the narrative to instruct and please the reader. They serve a subsidiary goal of demonstrating the substantial unity of the earliest Christian preaching, even as they embody Luke's own interpretation of the "events" surrounding the emergence of the church.

Apart from any value Acts has a work of history, it is an important example of early Christian theology. Luke develops the idea of the church as a historical entity with its own distinctive period. Moreover, the earliest church, by being confined to Jerusalem, is set apart from the church of Luke's day. The ideal and unrepeatable structures of the early community are accounted for by the presence of the apostles and eyewitnesses. Luke's concern to highlight the continuity between Israel and the church is expressed by the continued observance of Jewish practices in the early period, implicitly in contrast to Luke's later situation. The gap between Luke's generation and the primitive time is bridged by the endorsement of the Gentile mission in the deliberations of the apostolic council and the promulgation of the apostolic decree (15.20, 29; 21.25). The latter pronouncement may have been of practical value for Luke's community in particular, creating the conditions necessary to allow table fellowship between Jewish and Gentile Christians. Luke's portrayal of Christianity's close ties to Judaism also bolsters his appeal to Roman officials not to concern themselves with "internal theological disputes" (25.19, 20). Acts portrays influential Romans expressing interest in Christianity (13.12; 19.31), or at least substantiating that it poses no threat to the state (18.15; 19.37; 23.29; 25.25; 26.32). In this way Luke demonstrates the nonsubversive nature of the church, possibly in an effort to convince Roman citizens of his own day that nothing stood in the way of their membership in the Christian community.

Key among the factors promoting continuity within the church itself throughout the narrative are the descriptions of the church's proclamation and teaching about Jesus and the constancy of the
presence of the Spirit as the prime mover at the crucial junctures of early ecclesiastical history (e.g., 8.29; 10.19; 16.6-7). Yet in Acts it is God who occupies the dominant place. Jesus is described as a man whom God legitimated by mighty works, wonders, and signs (2.22). The view of Christ's death as atoning occurs only once in an expression taken over from the tradition (20.28). The focal point of salvation is the resurrection, which is marked as the crucial turning point of history. The combination of all these forces allows Luke to portray the successful expansion of the early Christian mission throughout the Roman Empire under the direction of the Spirit according to the purpose of God.

[Acts 1]
Introduction and summary

1 In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning 2 until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. 3 After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. 4 While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." 9 When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10 While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. 11 They said,
"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. 13 When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. 14 All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

The restoration of the twelve

15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, 16 "Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus — 17 for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry." 18 (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. 19 This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language Hakeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) 20 "For it is written in the book of Psalms,

'Let his homestead become desolate,
and let there be no one to live in it';
and

'Let another take his position of overseer.'
21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us — one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection." 23 So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas
turned aside to go to his own place." 26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

[Acts 2]
The day of Pentecost

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs — in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." 12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:
17 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."
18 Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.
19 And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.
20 The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the LORD's great and glorious day.
21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

22 "You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know — 23 this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. 24 But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. 25 For David says concerning him,
'I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;
26 therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover my flesh will live in hope.
27 For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
or let your Holy One experience corruption.
28 You have made known to me the ways of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'

29 "Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,
'He was not abandoned to Hades,
nor did his flesh experience corruption.'
32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that
you both see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

'The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at my right hand,
35 until I make your enemies your footstool.'"
36 Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?" 38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him." 40 And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Life in the first Christian community

43 Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. 44 All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

[Acts 3]
Peter's healing miracle in the Temple

1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. 2 And a man lame from birth
was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. 3 When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. 4 Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." 5 And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. 8 Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 All the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

**Peter's explanation**

11 While he clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's Portico, utterly astonished. 12 When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? 13 The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. 14 But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, 15 and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. 16 And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

17 "And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. 18 In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. 19 Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out, 20 so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may
send the Messiah appointed for you, that is, Jesus, 21 who must remain in heaven until the time of universal restoration that God announced long ago through his holy prophets. 22 Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you from your own people a prophet like me. You must listen to whatever he tells you. 23 And it will be that everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be utterly rooted out of the people.' 24 And all the prophets, as many as have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, also predicted these days. 25 You are the descendants of the prophets and of the covenant that God gave to your ancestors, saying to Abraham, 'And in your descendants all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' 26 When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you, to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

[Acts 4]
Arrest and release of Peter and John

1 While Peter and John were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came to them, 2 much annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead. 3 So they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 But many of those who heard the word believed; and they numbered about five thousand.

5 The next day their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem, 6 with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and all who were of the high-priestly family. 7 When they had made the prisoners stand in their midst, they inquired, "By what power or by what name did you do this?" 8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders, 9 if we are questioned today because of a good deed done to someone who was sick and are asked how this man has been healed, 10 let it be known to all of you, and to all the people of Israel, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead. 11 This Jesus is 'the stone that was rejected by you, the builders; it has become the cornerstone.'
12 There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus. 14 When they saw the man who had been cured standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. 15 So they ordered them to leave the council while they discussed the matter with one another. 16 They said, "What will we do with them? For it is obvious to all who live in Jerusalem that a notable sign has been done through them; we cannot deny it. 17 But to keep it from spreading further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name." 18 So they called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; 20 for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard." 21 After threatening them again, they let them go, finding no way to punish them because of the people, for all of them praised God for what had happened. 22 For the man on whom this sign of healing had been performed was more than forty years old.

Prayer of the community

23 After they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard it, they raised their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and everything in them, 25 it is you who said by the Holy Spirit through our ancestor David, your servant:

'Why did the Gentiles rage,
and the peoples imagine vain things?
26 The kings of the earth took their stand,
and the rulers have gathered together
against the Lord and against his Messiah.'

27 For in this city, in fact, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, 28 to do whatever your hand and
your plan had predestined to take place. 29 And now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." 31 When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.

The sharing of goods

32 Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. 33 With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. 35 They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. 36 There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"). 37 He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

[Acts 5]

1 But a man named Ananias, with the consent of his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property; 2 with his wife's knowledge, he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 "Ananias," Peter asked, "why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us but to God!" 5 Now when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard of it. 6 The young men came and wrapped up his body, then carried him out and buried him.
7 After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you and your husband sold the land for such and such a price." And she said, "Yes, that was the price." 9 Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." 10 Immediately she fell down at his feet and died. When the young men came in they found her dead, so they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11 And great fear seized the whole church and all who heard of these things.

12 Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. 13 None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. 14 Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women, 15 so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by. 16 A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured.

Second arrest of the apostles

17 Then the high priest took action; he and all who were with him (that is, the sect of the Sadducees), being filled with jealousy, 18 arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. 19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, brought them out, and said, 20 "Go, stand in the temple and tell the people the whole message about this life." 21 When they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and went on with their teaching.

When the high priest and those with him arrived, they called together the council and the whole body of the elders of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But when the temple police went there, they did not find them in the prison; so they returned and reported, 23 "We found the prison securely locked and the guards standing at the doors, but when we opened them, we found no one..."
inside." 24 Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were perplexed about them, wondering what might be going on. 25 Then someone arrived and announced, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!" 26 Then the captain went with the temple police and brought them, but without violence, for they were afraid of being stoned by the people.

27 When they had brought them, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, 28 saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us." 29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. 30 The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. 31 God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

33 When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. 34 But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up and ordered the men to be put outside for a short time. 35 Then he said to them, "Fellow Israelites, consider carefully what you propose to do to these men. 36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him; but he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and disappeared. 37 After him Judas the Galilean rose up at the time of the census and got people to follow him; he also perished, and all who followed him were scattered. 38 So in the present case, I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone; because if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; 39 but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them — in that case you may even be found fighting against God!"

They were convinced by him, 40 and when they had called in the apostles, they had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 As they left the council, they
rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name. 42 And every day in the temple and at home they did not cease to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah.

[Acts 6]
Choice of the seven

1 Now during those days, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food. 2 And the twelve called together the whole community of the disciples and said, "It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Therefore, friends, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, 4 while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word." 5 What they said pleased the whole community, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, together with Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. 6 They had these men stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 The word of God continued to spread; the number of the disciples increased greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

Preaching and martyrdom of Stephen

8 Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. 9 Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. 10 But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. 11 Then they secretly instigated some men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." 12 They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. 13 They set up false witnesses who said, "This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; 14
for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us." 15 And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

[Acts 7]

1 Then the high priest asked him, "Are these things so?" 2 And Stephen replied:

"Brothers and fathers, listen to me. The God of glory appeared to our ancestor Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, 3 and said to him, 'Leave your country and your relatives and go to the land that I will show you.' 4 Then he left the country of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After his father died, God had him move from there to this country in which you are now living. 5 He did not give him any of it as a heritage, not even a foot's length, but promised to give it to him as his possession and to his descendants after him, even though he had no child. 6 And God spoke in these terms, that his descendants would be resident aliens in a country belonging to others, who would enslave them and mistreat them during four hundred years. 7 'But I will judge the nation that they serve,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and worship me in this place.' 8 Then he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the twelve patriarchs.

9 "The patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him, 10 and rescued him from all his afflictions, and enabled him to win favor and to show wisdom when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed him ruler over Egypt and over all his household. 11 Now there came a famine throughout Egypt and Canaan, and great suffering, and our ancestors could find no food. 12 But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our ancestors there on their first visit. 13 On the second visit Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. 14 Then Joseph sent and invited his father Jacob and all his relatives to come to him, seventy-five in all; 15 so Jacob went down to Egypt. He himself
died there as well as our ancestors, 16 and their bodies were brought back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem.

17 "But as the time drew near for the fulfillment of the promise that God had made to Abraham, our people in Egypt increased and multiplied 18 until another king who had not known Joseph ruled over Egypt. 19 He dealt craftily with our race and forced our ancestors to abandon their infants so that they would die. 20 At this time Moses was born, and he was beautiful before God. For three months he was brought up in his father's house; 21 and when he was abandoned, Pharaoh's daughter adopted him and brought him up as her own son. 22 So Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his words and deeds.

23 "When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his relatives, the Israelites. 24 When he saw one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. 25 He supposed that his kinsfolk would understand that God through him was rescuing them, but they did not understand. 26 The next day he came to some of them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you wrong each other?' 27 But the man who was wronging his neighbor pushed Moses aside, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' 29 When he heard this, Moses fled and became a resident alien in the land of Midian. There he became the father of two sons.

30 "Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush. 31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight; and as he approached to look, there came the voice of the Lord: 32 'I am the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Moses began to tremble and did not dare to look. 33 Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. 34 I have surely seen the mistreatment of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to rescue them. Come now, I will send you to Egypt.'
35 "It was this Moses whom they rejected when they said, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' and whom God now sent as both ruler and liberator through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 He led them out, having performed wonders and signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years. 37 This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, 'God will raise up a prophet for you from your own people as he raised me up.' 38 He is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living oracles to give to us. 39 Our ancestors were unwilling to obey him; instead, they pushed him aside, and in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, 40 saying to Aaron, 'Make gods for us who will lead the way for us; as for this Moses who led us out from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has happened to him.' 41 At that time they made a calf, offered a sacrifice to the idol, and reveled in the works of their hands. 42 But God turned away from them and handed them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: 43 No; you took along the tent of Moloch, and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship; so I will remove you beyond Babylon.'

44 "Our ancestors had the tent of testimony in the wilderness, as God directed when he spoke to Moses, ordering him to make it according to the pattern he had seen. 45 Our ancestors in turn brought it in with Joshua when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before our ancestors. And it was there until the time of David, 46 who found favor with God and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. 47 But it was Solomon who built a house for him. 48 Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with human hands; as the prophet says, 49 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord, or what is the place of my rest?' 50 Did not my hand make all these things?"
51 "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. 52 Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. 53 You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it."

54 When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. 55 But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" 57 But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. 58 Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died. [Acts 8] 1a And Saul approved of their killing him.

[Acts 8]
Spread of the gospel to Samaria and beyond

1b That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria. 2 Devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. 3 But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison.

4 Now those who were scattered went from place to place, proclaiming the word. 5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. 6 The crowds with one accord listened eagerly to what was said by Philip, hearing and seeing the signs that he did, 7 for unclean spirits, crying with loud shrieks, came out of many who were possessed; and many others who were paralyzed or lame were cured. 8 So there was great joy in that city.
9 Now a certain man named Simon had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he was someone great. 10 All of them, from the least to the greatest, listened to him eagerly, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." 11 And they listened eagerly to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. 12 But when they believed Philip, who was proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Even Simon himself believed. After being baptized, he stayed constantly with Philip and was amazed when he saw the signs and great miracles that took place.

14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. 15 The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit 16 (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). 17 Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me also this power so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain God's gift with money! 21 You have no part or share in this, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent therefore of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and the chains of wickedness." 24 Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may happen to me."

25 Now after Peter and John had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, proclaiming the good news to many villages of the Samaritans.

26 Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) 27 So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the
Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

[Acts 9]
The conversion and call of Saul of Tarsus

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom..."
you are persecuting. 6 But get up and enter the city, and you will be
told what you are to do." 7 The men who were traveling with him
stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. 8 Saul
got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see
nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.
9 For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

10 Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said
to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." 11 The
Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at
the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this
moment he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named
Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his
sight." 13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about
this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; 14
and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke
your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument
whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and
before the people of Israel; 16 I myself will show him how much he
must suffer for the sake of my name." 17 So Ananias went and entered
the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord
Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you
may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And
immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was
restored. Then he got up and was baptized, 19 and after taking some
food, he regained his strength.

**Saul's preaching in Damascus and first visit to Jerusalem**

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, 20 and
immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He
is the Son of God." 21 All who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not
this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked
this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing
them bound before the chief priests?" 22 Saul became increasingly
more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by
proving that Jesus was the Messiah.
23 After some time had passed, the Jews plotted to kill him, but their plot became known to Saul. They were watching the gates day and night so that they might kill him; but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.

26 When he had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him, brought him to the apostles, and described for them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. 28 So he went in and out among them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 He spoke and argued with the Hellenists; but they were attempting to kill him. 30 When the believers learned of it, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

31 Meanwhile the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was built up. Living in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Peter in Lydda and Joppa

32 Now as Peter went here and there among all the believers, he came down also to the saints living in Lydda. 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years, for he was paralyzed. 34 Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; get up and make your bed!" And immediately he got up. 35 And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

36 Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. 37 At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. 38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, "Please come to us without delay." 39 So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics...
and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. 40 Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, "Tabitha, get up." Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. 41 He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. 42 This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. 43 Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

[Acts 10]
The conversion of Cornelius

1 In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort, as it was called. 2 He was a devout man who feared God with all his household; he gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God. 3 One afternoon at about three o'clock he had a vision in which he clearly saw an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius." 4 He stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" He answered, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. 5 Now send men to Joppa for a certain Simon who is called Peter; 6 he is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside." 7 When the angel who spoke to him had left, he called two of his slaves and a devout soldier from the ranks of those who served him, 8 and after telling them everything, he sent them to Joppa.

9 About noon the next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat; and while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners. 12 In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air. 13 Then he heard a voice saying, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat." 14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean." 15 The voice said to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." 16 This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven.
17 Now while Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Simon's house and were standing by the gate. 18 They called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was staying there. 19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look, three men are searching for you. 20 Now go down, go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them." 21 So Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?" 22 They answered, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." 23 So Peter invited them in and gave them lodging.

The next day he got up and went with them, and some of the believers from Joppa accompanied him. 24 The following day they came to Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 On Peter's arrival Cornelius met him, and falling at his feet, worshiped him. 26 But Peter made him get up, saying, "Stand up; I am only a mortal." 27 And as he talked with him, he went in and found that many had assembled; 28 and he said to them, "You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean. 29 So when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now may I ask why you sent for me?"

30 Cornelius replied, "Four days ago at this very hour, at three o'clock, I was praying in my house when suddenly a man in dazzling clothes stood before me. 31 He said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter; he is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.' 33 Therefore I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. So now all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say."
34 Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. 36 You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ — he is Lord of all. 37 That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. 39 We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; 40 but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, 41 not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. 43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

44 While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. 45 The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, 46 for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, 47 "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

[Acts 11]
Peter's defense

1 Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, 3 saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" 4 Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. 6 As I looked at it closely I saw four-
footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. 7 I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' 8 But I replied, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' 9 But a second time the voice answered from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.' 
10 This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. 
11 At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. 12 The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. 13 He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; 14 he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.' 
15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. 16 And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?' 
18 When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

Mission to the Greeks in Antioch

19 Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that took place over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and they spoke the word to no one except Jews. 20 But among them were some men of Cyprus and Cyrene who, on coming to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, proclaiming the Lord Jesus. 21 The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord. 22 News of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he came and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced, and he exhorted them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast devotion; 24 for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were brought to the Lord. 25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great
many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called "Christians."

**Antioch aids Jerusalem**

27 At that time prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them named Agabus stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine over all the world; and this took place during the reign of Claudius. 29 The disciples determined that according to their ability, each would send relief to the believers living in Judea; 30 this they did, sending it to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

**[Acts 12]**

**Persecution touches the apostles**

1 About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. 2 He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. 3 After he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also. (This was during the festival of Unleavened Bread.) 4 When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. 5 While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him.

6 The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him, saying, "Get up quickly." And the chains fell off his wrists. 8 The angel said to him, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals." He did so. Then he said to him, "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me." 9 Peter went out and followed him; he did not realize that what was happening with the angel's help was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. 10 After they had passed the first and the second guard, they came before the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went outside and walked along a lane, when suddenly the angel left him. 11 Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I am sure that the Lord has
sent his angel and rescued me from the hands of Herod and from all that the Jewish people were expecting."

12 As soon as he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John whose other name was Mark, where many had gathered and were praying. 13 When he knocked at the outer gate, a maid named Rhoda came to answer. 14 On recognizing Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that, instead of opening the gate, she ran in and announced that Peter was standing at the gate. 15 They said to her, "You are out of your mind!" But she insisted that it was so. They said, "It is his angel." 16 Meanwhile Peter continued knocking; and when they opened the gate, they saw him and were amazed. 17 He motioned to them with his hand to be silent, and described for them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he added, "Tell this to James and to the believers." Then he left and went to another place.

18 When morning came, there was no small commotion among the soldiers over what had become of Peter. 19 When Herod had searched for him and could not find him, he examined the guards and ordered them to be put to death. Then he went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there.

Death of Herod Agrippa

20 Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. So they came to him in a body; and after winning over Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for a reconciliation, because their country depended on the king's country for food. 21 On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat on the platform, and delivered a public address to them. 22 The people kept shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a mortal!" 23 And immediately, because he had not given the glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.
Commission at Antioch

24 But the word of God continued to advance and gain adherents. 25 Then after completing their mission Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem and brought with them John, whose other name was Mark.

[Acts 13]

1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a member of the court of Herod the ruler, and Saul. 2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

Cyprus

4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed to Cyprus. 5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John also to assist them. 6 When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they met a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet, named Bar-Jesus. 7 He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and wanted to hear the word of God. 8 But the magician Elymas (for that is the translation of his name) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 But Saul, also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? 11 And now listen — the hand of the Lord is against you, and you will be blind for a while, unable to see the sun." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he went about groping for someone to lead him by the hand. 12 When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.
Journey to Antioch of Pisidia and Iconium

13 Then Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. John, however, left them and returned to Jerusalem; 14 but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. 15 After the reading of the law and the prophets, the officials of the synagogue sent them a message, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, give it." 16 So Paul stood up and with a gesture began to speak:

"You Israelites, and others who fear God, listen. 17 The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. 18 For about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. 19 After he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance for about four hundred fifty years. After that he gave them judges until the time of the prophet Samuel. 20 Then they asked for a king; and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, who reigned for forty years. 21 When he had removed him, he made David their king. In his testimony about him he said, 'I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after my heart, who will carry out all my wishes.' 22 Of this man's posterity God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised; 23 before his coming John had already proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 24 And as John was finishing his work, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but one is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of the sandals on his feet.'

26 "My brothers, you descendants of Abraham's family, and others who fear God, to us the message of this salvation has been sent. 27 Because the residents of Jerusalem and their leaders did not recognize him or understand the words of the prophets that are read every sabbath, they fulfilled those words by condemning him. 28 Even though they found no cause for a sentence of death, they asked Pilate to have him killed. 29 When they had carried out everything that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him from the dead; 31 and for many days he
appeared to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and they are now his witnesses to the people. 32 And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm,

'You are my Son;
    today I have begotten you.'

34 As to his raising him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way,

'I will give you the holy promises made to David.'

35 Therefore he has also said in another psalm,

'You will not let your Holy One experience corruption.'

36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, died, was laid beside his ancestors, and experienced corruption; 37 but he whom God raised up experienced no corruption. 38 Let it be known to you therefore, my brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you; 39 by this Jesus everyone who believes is set free from all those sins from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. 40 Beware, therefore, that what the prophets said does not happen to you:

41 'Look, you scoffers!
    Be amazed and perish,
    for in your days I am doing a work,
    a work that you will never believe, even if someone tells you.'"

42 As Paul and Barnabas were going out, the people urged them to speak about these things again the next sabbath. 43 When the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

44 The next sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy; and blaspheming, they contradicted what was spoken by Paul. 46 Then both Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you reject it and judge yourselves to be unworthy of eternal life, we
are now turning to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us, saying,

'I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles,
so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and praised the word of the Lord; and as many as had been destined for eternal life became believers. 49 Thus the word of the Lord spread throughout the region. 50 But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, and stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their region. 51 So they shook the dust off their feet in protest against them, and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

[Acts 14]
Ministry in the Iconium region and return to Antioch

1 The same thing occurred in Iconium, where Paul and Barnabas went into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3 So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who testified to the word of his grace by granting signs and wonders to be done through them. 4 But the residents of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. 5 And when an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, 6 the apostles learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country; 7 and there they continued proclaiming the good news.

8 In Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet and had never walked, for he had been crippled from birth. 9 He listened to Paul as he was speaking. And Paul, looking at him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, 10 said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And the man sprang up and began to walk. 11 When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" 12
Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. 13 The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates; he and the crowds wanted to offer sacrifice. 14 When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting, 15 "Friends, why are you doing this? We are mortals just like you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. 16 In past generations he allowed all the nations to follow their own ways; 17 yet he has not left himself without a witness in doing good — giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling you with food and your hearts with joy." 18 Even with these words, they scarcely restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.

19 But Jews came there from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds. Then they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But when the disciples surrounded him, he got up and went into the city. The next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 After they had proclaimed the good news to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch. 22 There they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith, saying, "It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God." 23 And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.

24 Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. 25 When they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. 26 From there they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had completed. 27 When they arrived, they called the church together and related all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles. 28 And they stayed there with the disciples for some time.
[Acts 15]
Jerusalem affirms the admission of Gentiles

1 Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." 2 And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders. 3 So they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the believers. 4 When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. 5 But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, "It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses."

6 The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. 7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the Gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. 8 And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us; 9 and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. 10 Now therefore why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? 11 On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."

12 The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles. 13 After they finished speaking, James replied, "My brothers, listen to me. 14 Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. 15 This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written,
16 'After this I will return, 
and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; 
from its ruins I will rebuild it, 
and I will set it up, 
17 so that all other peoples may seek the Lord — 
even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called. 
Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things 18 known 
from long ago.'

19 Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble 
those Gentiles who are turning to God, 20 but we should write to them 
to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and 
from whatever has been strangled and from blood. 21 For in every city, 
for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he 
has been read aloud every sabbath in the synagogues."

22 Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole 
church, decided to choose men from among their members and to send 
them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called 
Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers, 23 with the following 
letter: "The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the believers 
of Gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. 24 Since we 
have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though 
with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have 
unsettled your minds, 25 we have decided unanimously to choose 
representatives and send them to you, along with our beloved 
Barnabas and Paul, 26 who have risked their lives for the sake of our 
Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who 
themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it 
has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no 
进一步的负担 than these essentials: 29 that you abstain from what 
has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled 
and from fornication. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do 
well. Farewell."

30 So they were sent off and went down to Antioch. When they 
gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. 31 When its members read it, they rejoiced at the exhortation. 32 Judas 
and Silas, who were themselves prophets, said much to encourage and
strengthen the believers. 33 After they had been there for some time, they were sent off in peace by the believers to those who had sent them. 35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, and there, with many others, they taught and proclaimed the word of the Lord.

Paul revisits the churches of the previous mission

36 After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Come, let us return and visit the believers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." 37 Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul decided not to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work. 39 The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. 40 But Paul chose Silas and set out, the believers commending him to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Acts 16

1 Paul went on also to Derbe and to Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and had him circumcised because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 As they went from town to town, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers daily.

Directed by the Spirit through Asia Minor to Troas

6 They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. 7 When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; 8 so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man
of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

Paul and Silas in Philippi

11 We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. 13 On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. 14 A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. 15 When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

16 One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. 17 While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." 18 She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

19 But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. 20 When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews 21 and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe." 22 The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. 23 After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to
keep them securely. 24 Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. 27 When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." 29 The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. 34 He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

35 When morning came, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." 36 And the jailer reported the message to Paul, saying, "The magistrates sent word to let you go; therefore come out now and go in peace." 37 But Paul replied, "They have beaten us in public, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they going to discharge us in secret? Certainly not! Let them come and take us out themselves." 38 The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens; 39 so they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. 40 After leaving the prison they went to Lydia's home; and when they had seen and encouraged the brothers and sisters there, they departed.
1 After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three sabbath days argued with them from the scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you." 4 Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. 5 But the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. While they were searching for Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly, they attacked Jason's house. 6 When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, "These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, 7 and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus." 8 The people and the city officials were disturbed when they heard this, 9 and after they had taken bail from Jason and the others, they let them go.

10 That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas off to Beroea; and when they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 These Jews were more receptive than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message very eagerly and examined the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed, including not a few Greek women and men of high standing. 13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Beroea as well, they came there too, to stir up and incite the crowds. 14 Then the believers immediately sent Paul away to the coast, but Silas and Timothy remained behind. 15 Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and after receiving instructions to have Silas and Timothy join him as soon as possible, they left him.
Paul at Athens

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17 So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. 18 Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) 19 So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means." 21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.

22 Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. 23 For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. 26 From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, 27 so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him — though indeed he is not far from each one of us. 28 For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said,

'For we too are his offspring.'

29 Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. 30 While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged
in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has
given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

32 When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed; but
others said, "We will hear you again about this." 33 At that point Paul
left them. 34 But some of them joined him and became believers,
including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and
others with them.

[Acts 18]
Paul in Corinth

1 After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 There he found a
Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from
Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to
leave Rome. Paul went to see them, 3 and, because he was of the same
trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together — by trade they
were tentmakers. 4 Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue
and would try to convince Jews and Greeks.

5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied
with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was
Jesus. 6 When they opposed and reviled him, in protest he shook the
dust from his clothes and said to them, "Your blood be on your own
heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." 7 Then he
left the synagogue and went to the house of a man named Titius
Justus, a worshiper of God; his house was next door to the synagogue.
8 Crispus, the official of the synagogue, became a believer in the Lord,
together with all his household; and many of the Corinthians who
heard Paul became believers and were baptized. 9 One night the Lord
said to Paul in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be
silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm
you, for there are many in this city who are my people." 11 He stayed
there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united
attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal. 13 They said, "This
man is persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to
the law." 14 Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of crime or serious villainy, I would be justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews; 15 but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I do not wish to be a judge of these matters." 16 And he dismissed them from the tribunal. 17 Then all of them seized Sosthenes, the official of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of these things.

End of the second missionary journey and beginning of the third

18 After staying there for a considerable time, Paul said farewell to the believers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had his hair cut, for he was under a vow. 19 When they reached Ephesus, he left them there, but first he himself went into the synagogue and had a discussion with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to stay longer, he declined; 21 but on taking leave of them, he said, "I will return to you, if God wills." Then he set sail from Ephesus.

22 When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch. 23 After spending some time there he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

Apollos in Ephesus

24 Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the Way of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained the Way of God to him more accurately. 27 And when he wished to cross over to Achaia, the believers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. On his arrival he greatly helped those who through grace had become believers, 28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the scriptures
that the Messiah is Jesus.

[Acts 19]
Paul's long ministry in Ephesus

1 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the interior regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. 2 He said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?" They replied, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 Then he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They answered, "Into John's baptism." 4 Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied — 7 altogether there were about twelve of them.

8 He entered the synagogue and for three months spoke out boldly, and argued persuasively about the kingdom of God. 9 When some stubbornly refused to believe and spoke evil of the Way before the congregation, he left them, taking the disciples with him, and argued daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. 10 This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.

11 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, 12 so that when the handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, their diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them. 13 Then some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." 14 Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. 15 But the evil spirit said to them in reply, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" 16 Then the man with the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered them all, and so overpowered them that they fled out of the house naked and wounded. 17 When this became known to all residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, everyone was awestruck; and the name of the Lord Jesus was praised. 18 Also many of those who became believers confessed and disclosed
their practices. 19 A number of those who practiced magic collected their books and burned them publicly; when the value of these books was calculated, it was found to come to fifty thousand silver coins. 20 So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

21 Now after these things had been accomplished, Paul resolved in the Spirit to go through Macedonia and Achaia, and then to go on to Jerusalem. He said, "After I have gone there, I must also see Rome." 22 So he sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he himself stayed for some time longer in Asia.

23 About that time no little disturbance broke out concerning the Way. 24 A man named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the artisans. 25 These he gathered together, with the workers of the same trade, and said, "Men, you know that we get our wealth from this business. 26 You also see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost the whole of Asia this Paul has persuaded and drawn away a considerable number of people by saying that gods made with hands are not gods. 27 And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be scorned, and she will be deprived of her majesty that brought all Asia and the world to worship her."

28 When they heard this, they were enraged and shouted, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" 29 The city was filled with the confusion; and people rushed together to the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's travel companions. 30 Paul wished to go into the crowd, but the disciples would not let him; 31 even some officials of the province of Asia, who were friendly to him, sent him a message urging him not to venture into the theater. 32 Meanwhile, some were shouting one thing, some another; for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. 33 Some of the crowd gave instructions to Alexander, whom the Jews had pushed forward. And Alexander motioned for silence and tried to make a defense before the people. 34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours all of them shouted in unison, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" 35 But
when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Citizens of Ephesus, who is there that does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the temple keeper of the great Artemis and of the statue that fell from heaven? 36 Since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. 37 You have brought these men here who are neither temple robbers nor blasphemers of our goddess. 38 If therefore Demetrius and the artisans with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls; let them bring charges there against one another. 39 If there is anything further you want to know, it must be settled in the regular assembly. 40 For we are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." 41 When he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.

[Acts 20]
The visit to Greece

1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples; and after encouraging them and saying farewell, he left for Macedonia. 2 When he had gone through those regions and had given the believers much encouragement, he came to Greece, 3 where he stayed for three months. He was about to set sail for Syria when a plot was made against him by the Jews, and so he decided to return through Macedonia. 4 He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Beroea, by Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, by Gaius from Derbe, and by Timothy, as well as by Tychicus and Trophimus from Asia. 5 They went ahead and were waiting for us in Troas; 6 but we sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we joined them in Troas, where we stayed for seven days.

The raising of Eutychus and the speech to the Ephesian elders

7 On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread, Paul was holding a discussion with them; since he intended to leave the next day, he continued speaking until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were meeting. 9 A young man named Eutychus, who was sitting in the window, began to sink off into a deep sleep while Paul talked still longer. Overcome by sleep, he fell to the
ground three floors below and was picked up dead. 10 But Paul went
down, and bending over him took him in his arms, and said, "Do not
be alarmed, for his life is in him." 11 Then Paul went upstairs, and after
he had broken bread and eaten, he continued to converse with them
until dawn; then he left. 12 Meanwhile they had taken the boy away
alive and were not a little comforted.

13 We went ahead to the ship and set sail for Assos, intending to take
Paul on board there; for he had made this arrangement, intending to
go by land himself. 14 When he met us in Assos, we took him on board
and went to Mitylene. 15 We sailed from there, and on the following
day we arrived opposite Chios. The next day we touched at Samos, and
the day after that we came to Miletus. 16 For Paul had decided to sail
past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia; he was
eager to be in Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost.

17 From Miletus he sent a message to Ephesus, asking the elders of the
church to meet him. 18 When they came to him, he said to them:

"You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the
first day that I set foot in Asia, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and
with tears, enduring the trials that came to me through the plots of
the Jews. 20 I did not shrink from doing anything helpful, proclaiming
the message to you and teaching you publicly and from house to
house, 21 as I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance
toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus. 22 And now, as a captive
to the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will
happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in
every city that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me. 24
But I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my
course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to
the good news of God's grace.

25 "And now I know that none of you, among whom I have gone
about proclaiming the kingdom, will ever see my face again. 26
Therefore I declare to you this day that I am not responsible for the
blood of any of you, 27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the
whole purpose of God. 28 Keep watch over yourselves and over all the
flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. 29 I know that after I have gone, savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Some even from your own group will come distorting the truth in order to entice the disciples to follow them. 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to warn everyone with tears. 32 And now I commend you to God and to the message of his grace, a message that is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all who are sanctified.

33 I coveted no one's silver or gold or clothing. 34 You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. 35 In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

36 When he had finished speaking, he knelt down with them all and prayed. 37 There was much weeping among them all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, 38 grieving especially because of what he had said, that they would not see him again. Then they brought him to the ship.

[Acts 21]
Journey to Jerusalem

1 When we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. 2 When we found a ship bound for Phoenicia, we went on board and set sail. 3 We came in sight of Cyprus; and leaving it on our left, we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, because the ship was to unload its cargo there. 4 We looked up the disciples and stayed there for seven days. Through the Spirit they told Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5 When our days there were ended, we left and proceeded on our journey; and all of them, with wives and children, escorted us outside the city. There we knelt down on the beach and prayed 6 and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home.
7 When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and we greeted the believers and stayed with them for one day. 8 The next day we left and came to Caesarea; and we went into the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the seven, and stayed with him. 9 He had four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy. 10 While we were staying there for several days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11 He came to us and took Paul's belt, bound his own feet and hands with it, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is the way the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'" 12 When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14 Since he would not be persuaded, we remained silent except to say, "The LORD's will be done."

15 After these days we got ready and started to go up to Jerusalem. 16 Some of the disciples from Caesarea also came along and brought us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to stay.

**Paul's conformity to Judaism**

17 When we arrived in Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us warmly. 18 The next day Paul went with us to visit James; and all the elders were present. 19 After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. 20 When they heard it, they praised God. Then they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and they are all zealous for the law. 21 They have been told about you that you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs. 22 What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. 23 So do what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow. 24 Join these men, go through the rite of purification with them, and pay for the shaving of their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself observe and guard the law. 25 But as for the Gentiles who have
become believers, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication." 26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having purified himself, he entered the temple with them, making public the completion of the days of purification when the sacrifice would be made for each of them.

Uproar in the Temple and arrest of Paul

27 When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, who had seen him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd. They seized him, 28 shouting, "Fellow Israelites, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place; more than that, he has actually brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." 29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. 30 Then all the city was aroused, and the people rushed together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut. 31 While they were trying to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 Immediately he took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. When they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. 33 Then the tribune came, arrested him, and ordered him to be bound with two chains; he inquired who he was and what he had done. 34 Some in the crowd shouted one thing, some another; and as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. 35 When Paul came to the steps, the violence of the mob was so great that he had to be carried by the soldiers. 36 The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Away with him!"

37 Just as Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, "May I say something to you?" The tribune replied, "Do you know Greek? 38 Then you are not the Egyptian who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?" 39 Paul replied, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of an important city; I beg you, let me speak to the people." 40 When he had given him permission, Paul stood on the steps and
motioned to the people for silence; and when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

[Acts 22]
Defense in the Temple and Roman custody

1 "Brothers and fathers, listen to the defense that I now make before you."
2 When they heard him addressing them in Hebrew, they became even more quiet. Then he said:

3 "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, educated strictly according to our ancestral law, being zealous for God, just as all of you are today. 4 I persecuted this Way up to the point of death by binding both men and women and putting them in prison, 5 as the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify about me. From them I also received letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I went there in order to bind those who were there and to bring them back to Jerusalem for punishment.

6 "While I was on my way and approaching Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone about me. 7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' 8 I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' Then he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth whom you are persecuting.' 9 Now those who were with me saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who was speaking to me. 10 I asked, 'What am I to do, Lord?' The Lord said to me, 'Get up and go to Damascus; there you will be told everything that has been assigned to you to do.' 11 Since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus.

12 "A certain Ananias, who was a devout man according to the law and well spoken of by all the Jews living there, 13 came to me; and standing beside me, he said, 'Brother Saul, regain your sight!' In that very hour I regained my sight and saw him. 14 Then he said, 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear his own voice; 15 for you will be his witness to all the world
of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now why do you delay? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on his name.'

17 "After I had returned to Jerusalem and while I was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance 18 and saw Jesus saying to me, 'Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.' 19 And I said, 'Lord, they themselves know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. 20 And while the blood of your witness Stephen was shed, I myself was standing by, approving and keeping the coats of those who killed him.' 21 Then he said to me, 'Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

22 Up to this point they listened to him, but then they shouted, "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live." 23 And while they were shouting, throwing off their cloaks, and tossing dust into the air, 24 the tribune directed that he was to be brought into the barracks, and ordered him to be examined by flogging, to find out the reason for this outcry against him. 25 But when they had tied him up with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who is uncondemned?" 26 When the centurion heard that, he went to the tribune and said to him, "What are you about to do? This man is a Roman citizen." 27 The tribunal came and asked Paul, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" And he said, "Yes." 28 The tribune answered, "It cost me a large sum of money to get my citizenship." Paul said, "But I was born a citizen." 29 Immediately those who were about to examine him drew back from him; and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him.

**Paul before the Sanhedrin**

30 Since he wanted to find out what Paul was being accused of by the Jews, the next day he released him and ordered the chief priests and the entire council to meet. He brought Paul down and had him stand before them.
While Paul was looking intently at the council he said, "Brothers, up to this day I have lived my life with a clear conscience before God." 2 Then the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near him to strike him on the mouth. 3 At this Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting there to judge me according to the law, and yet in violation of the law you order me to be struck?" 4 Those standing nearby said, "Do you dare to insult God's high priest?" 5 And Paul said, "I did not realize, brothers, that he was high priest; for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a leader of your people.'"

6 When Paul noticed that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees, he called out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. I am on trial concerning the hope of the resurrection of the dead." 7 When he said this, a dissension began between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, or angel, or spirit; but the Pharisees acknowledge all three.) 9 Then a great clamor arose, and certain scribes of the Pharisees' group stood up and contended, "We find nothing wrong with this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" 10 When the dissension became violent, the tribune, fearing that they would tear Paul to pieces, ordered the soldiers to go down, take him by force, and bring him into the barracks.

11 That night the Lord stood near him and said, "Keep up your courage! For just as you have testified for me in Jerusalem, so you must bear witness also in Rome."

A plot to kill Paul results in his transfer to Caesarea

12 In the morning the Jews joined in a conspiracy and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. 13 There were more than forty who joined in this conspiracy. 14 They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food until we have killed Paul. 15 Now then, you and the council must notify the tribune to bring him down to you, on the pretext that you want to make a more thorough
examination of his case. And we are ready to do away with him before he arrives."

16 Now the son of Paul's sister heard about the ambush; so he went and gained entrance to the barracks and told Paul. 17 Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to report to him." 18 So he took him, brought him to the tribune, and said, "The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you; he has something to tell you." 19 The tribune took him by the hand, drew him aside privately, and asked, "What is it that you have to report to me?" 20 He answered, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more thoroughly into his case. 21 But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him. They have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink until they kill him. They are ready now and are waiting for your consent." 22 So the tribune dismissed the young man, ordering him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of this."

23 Then he summoned two of the centurions and said, "Get ready to leave by nine o'clock tonight for Caesarea with two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen. 24 Also provide mounts for Paul to ride, and take him safely to Felix the governor." 25 He wrote a letter to this effect:

26 "Claudius Lysias to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. 27 This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them, but when I had learned that he was a Roman citizen, I came with the guard and rescued him. 28 Since I wanted to know the charge for which they accused him, I had him brought to their council. 29 I found that he was accused concerning questions of their law, but was charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. 30 When I was informed that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him."
31 So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him during the night to Antipatris. 32 The next day they let the horsemen go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. 33 When they came to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. 34 On reading the letter, he asked what province he belonged to, and when he learned that he was from Cilicia, 35 he said, "I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive." Then he ordered that he be kept under guard in Herod's headquarters.

[Acts 24]
Paul before Felix

1 Five days later the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and an attorney, a certain Tertullus, and they reported their case against Paul to the governor. 2 When Paul had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying:

"Your Excellency, because of you we have long enjoyed peace, and reforms have been made for this people because of your foresight. 3 We welcome this in every way and everywhere with utmost gratitude. 4 But, to detain you no further, I beg you to hear us briefly with your customary graciousness. 5 We have, in fact, found this man a pestilent fellow, an agitator among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 He even tried to profane the temple, and so we seized him. 8 By examining him yourself you will be able to learn from him concerning everything of which we accuse him."

9 The Jews also joined in the charge by asserting that all this was true.

10 When the governor motioned to him to speak, Paul replied:

"I cheerfully make my defense, knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation. 11 As you can find out, it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. 12 They did not find me disputing with anyone in the temple or stirring up a crowd either in the synagogues or throughout the city. 13 Neither can they prove to you the charge that they now bring against me. 14 But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I
worship the God of our ancestors, believing everything laid down according to the law or written in the prophets. 15 I have a hope in God — a hope that they themselves also accept — that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. 16 Therefore I do my best always to have a clear conscience toward God and all people. 17 Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation and to offer sacrifices. 18 While I was doing this, they found me in the temple, completing the rite of purification, without any crowd or disturbance. 19 But there were some Jews from Asia — they ought to be here before you to make an accusation, if they have anything against me. 20 Or let these men here tell what crime they had found when I stood before the council, 21 unless it was this one sentence that I called out while standing before them, 'It is about the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'"

22 But Felix, who was rather well informed about the Way, adjourned the hearing with the comment, "When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case." 23 Then he ordered the centurion to keep him in custody, but to let him have some liberty and not to prevent any of his friends from taking care of his needs.

24 Some days later when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him speak concerning faith in Christ Jesus. 25 And as he discussed justice, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for the present; when I have an opportunity, I will send for you." 26 At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul, and for that reason he used to send for him very often and converse with him.

27 After two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and since he wanted to grant the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

[Acts 25]
Appeal to the emperor

1 Three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem 2 where the chief priests and the leaders of the Jews gave him a report against Paul. They appealed to him 3 and
requested, as a favor to them against Paul, to have him transferred to Jerusalem. They were, in fact, planning an ambush to kill him along the way. 4 Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea, and that he himself intended to go there shortly. 5 "So," he said, "let those of you who have the authority come down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them accuse him."

6 After he had stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea; the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. 7 When he arrived, the Jews who had gone down from Jerusalem surrounded him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove. 8 Paul said in his defense, "I have in no way committed an offense against the law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against the emperor." 9 But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, asked Paul, "Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and be tried there before me on these charges?" 10 Paul said, "I am appealing to the emperor's tribunal; this is where I should be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you very well know. 11 Now if I am in the wrong and have committed something for which I deserve to die, I am not trying to escape death; but if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can turn me over to them. I appeal to the emperor." 12 Then Festus, after he had conferred with his council, replied, "You have appealed to the emperor; to the emperor you will go."

Paul's defense before Agrippa

13 After several days had passed, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to welcome Festus. 14 Since they were staying there several days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying, "There is a man here who was left in prison by Felix. 15 When I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me about him and asked for a sentence against him. 16 I told them that it was not the custom of the Romans to hand over anyone before the accused had met the accusers face to face and had been given an opportunity to make a defense against the charge. 17 So when they met here, I lost no time, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought. 18 When the accusers stood up, they did not
charge him with any of the crimes that I was expecting. 19 Instead they had certain points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, but whom Paul asserted to be alive. 20 Since I was at a loss how to investigate these questions, I asked whether he wished to go to Jerusalem and be tried there on these charges. 21 But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of his Imperial Majesty, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to the emperor." 22 Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear the man myself." "Tomorrow," he said, "you will hear him."

23 So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then Festus gave the order and Paul was brought in. 24 And Festus said, "King Agrippa and all here present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish community petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. 25 But I found that he had done nothing deserving death; and when he appealed to his Imperial Majesty, I decided to send him. 26 But I have nothing definite to write to our sovereign about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write — 27 for it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner without indicating the charges against him."

[Acts 26]

1 Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." Then Paul stretched out his hand and began to defend himself:

2 "I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, 3 because you are especially familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews; therefore I beg of you to listen to me patiently.

4 "All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, a life spent from the beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. 5 They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that I have
belonged to the strictest sect of our religion and lived as a Pharisee. 6 And now I stand here on trial on account of my hope in the promise made by God to our ancestors, 7 a promise that our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship day and night. It is for this hope, your Excellency, that I am accused by Jews! 8 Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?

9 "Indeed, I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 And that is what I did in Jerusalem; with authority received from the chief priests, I not only locked up many of the saints in prison, but I also cast my vote against them when they were being condemned to death. 11 By punishing them often in all the synagogues I tried to force them to blaspheme; and since I was so furiously enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

12 "With this in mind, I was traveling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, 13 when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. 14 When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.' 15 I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The Lord answered, 'I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. 16 But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. 17 I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles — to whom I am sending you 18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

19 "After that, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout the countryside of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God and do deeds consistent with repentance. 21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. 22 To this day I have had help from God, and so I stand
here, testifying to both small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would take place: 23 that the Messiah must suffer, and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles."

24 While he was making this defense, Festus exclaimed, "You are out of your mind, Paul! Too much learning is driving you insane!" 25 But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking the sober truth. 26 Indeed the king knows about these things, and to him I speak freely; for I am certain that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." 28 Agrippa said to Paul, "Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?" 29 Paul replied, "Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that not only you but also all who are listening to me today might become such as I am — except for these chains."

30 Then the king got up, and with him the governor and Bernice and those who had been seated with them; 31 and as they were leaving, they said to one another, "This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment." 32 Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to the emperor."

[Acts 27]
Shipwreck

1 When it was decided that we were to sail for Italy, they transferred Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort, named Julius. 2 Embarking on a ship of Adramyttium that was about to set sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. 3 The next day we put in at Sidon; and Julius treated Paul kindly, and allowed him to go to his friends to be cared for. 4 Putting out to sea from there, we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. 5 After we had sailed across the sea that is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. 6 There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship bound for Italy and put us on board. 7 We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, and
as the wind was against us, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. 8 Sailing past it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasea.

9 Since much time had been lost and sailing was now dangerous, because even the Fast had already gone by, Paul advised them, 10 saying, "Sirs, I can see that the voyage will be with danger and much heavy loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives." 11 But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. 12 Since the harbor was not suitable for spending the winter, the majority was in favor of putting to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, where they could spend the winter. It was a harbor of Crete, facing southwest and northwest.

13 When a moderate south wind began to blow, they thought they could achieve their purpose; so they weighed anchor and began to sail past Crete, close to the shore. 14 But soon a violent wind, called the northeaster, rushed down from Crete. 15 Since the ship was caught and could not be turned head-on into the wind, we gave way to it and were driven. 16 By running under the lee of a small island called Cauda we were scarcely able to get the ship's boat under control. 17 After hoisting it up they took measures to undergird the ship; then, fearing that they would run on the Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and so were driven. 18 We were being pounded by the storm so violently that on the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard, 19 and on the third day with their own hands they threw the ship's tackle overboard. 20 When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest raged, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.

21 Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul then stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and thereby avoided this damage and loss. 22 I urge you now to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. 23 For last night there stood by me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, 24 and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before the emperor;
and indeed, God has granted safety to all those who are sailing with you.' 25 So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. 26 But we will have to run aground on some island."

27 When the fourteenth night had come, as we were drifting across the sea of Adria, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. 28 So they took soundings and found twenty fathoms; a little farther on they took soundings again and found fifteen fathoms. 29 Fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. 30 But when the sailors tried to escape from the ship and had lowered the boat into the sea, on the pretext of putting out anchors from the bow, 31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat and set it adrift.

33 Just before daybreak, Paul urged all of them to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have been in suspense and remaining without food, having eaten nothing. 34 Therefore I urge you to take some food, for it will help you survive; for none of you will lose a hair from your heads." 35 After he had said this, he took bread; and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat. 36 Then all of them were encouraged and took food for themselves. 37 (We were in all two hundred seventy-six persons in the ship.) 38 After they had satisfied their hunger, they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea.

39 In the morning they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned to run the ship ashore, if they could. 40 So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea. At the same time they loosened the ropes that tied the steering-oars; then hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. 41 But striking a reef, they ran the ship aground; the bow stuck and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the force of the waves. 42 The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, so that none might swim away and escape; 43 but the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who
could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, and the rest to follow, some on planks and others on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.

[Acts 28]

Paul on Malta

1 After we had reached safety, we then learned that the island was called Malta. 2 The natives showed us unusual kindness. Since it had begun to rain and was cold, they kindled a fire and welcomed all of us around it. 3 Paul had gathered a bundle of brushwood and was putting it on the fire, when a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. 4 When the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "This man must be a murderer; though he has escaped from the sea, justice has not allowed him to live." 5 He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. 6 They were expecting him to swell up or drop dead, but after they had waited a long time and saw that nothing unusual had happened to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

7 Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the leading man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. 8 It so happened that the father of Publius lay sick in bed with fever and dysentery. Paul visited him and cured him by praying and putting his hands on him. 9 After this happened, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. 10 They bestowed many honors on us, and when we were about to sail, they put on board all the provisions we needed.

The journey to Rome

11 Three months later we set sail on a ship that had wintered at the island, an Alexandrian ship with the Twin Brothers as its figurehead. 12 We put in at Syracuse and stayed there for three days; 13 then we weighed anchor and came to Rhegium. After one day there a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli. 14 There we found believers and were invited to stay with them for seven days.
And so we came to Rome. 15 The believers from there, when they heard of us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage.

16 When we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

Paul and the Jews of Rome

17 Three days later he called together the local leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, he said to them, "Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors, yet I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. 18 When they had examined me, the Romans wanted to release me, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. 19 But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to the emperor — even though I had no charge to bring against my nation. 20 For this reason therefore I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is for the sake of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain." 21 They replied, "We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken anything evil about you. 22 But we would like to hear from you what you think, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against."

23 After they had set a day to meet with him, they came to him at his lodgings in great numbers. From morning until evening he explained the matter to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets. 24 Some were convinced by what he had said, while others refused to believe. 25 So they disagreed with each other; and as they were leaving, Paul made one further statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah, 26 'Go to this people and say, You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive."
27 For this people's heart has grown dull,
    and their ears are hard of hearing,
    and they have shut their eyes;
    so that they might not look with their eyes,
    and listen with their ears,
    and understand with their heart and turn —
    and I would heal them.'

28 Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen."

**Conclusion**

30 He lived there two whole years at his own expense and welcomed all who came to him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.
INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTERS/EPISTLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Classification and Authorship of the New Testament Letters

Letters are the earliest documents in the New Testament, and its most common literary form: Some scholars date 1 Thessalonians before 50 CE, twenty years before Mark's gospel, and there are twenty-one separate letters in the New Testament. Thirteen of these are from Paul or his missionary associates: Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. When Hebrews was attributed to Paul, the number of Pauline letters in ancient manuscripts and lists came to be fourteen. Another seven letters, which appears pseudonymously attributed to other apostles, round out the group; 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, James, and Jude. The Greek word "epistole," "letter," originally referred to an oral communication sent by messenger (Herodotus, Histories 4.10.1). Even in the New Testament period, the letter-carrier might be entrusted with crucial information about a letter's content. Paul often makes a point of including missionary associates in the greeting of his letters (1 Cor 1.1; 2 Cor 1.1; Phil 1.1; Col 1.1; 1 Thess 1.1; Philem 1). He omits them in Galatians, where he has no future plans to visit the region, and in Romans, addressed to a church he did not found. Ephesians lacks a specific destination in the best manuscripts and may be a circular exhortation by a later disciple of Paul.

Several other Pauline epistles also differ in language and theological emphasis from the major Pauline letters. The so-called Pastorals (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), addressed to his key assistants, treat them as youthful bishops of local churches. They look to a future in which
Christians are established in the larger society. While both 1 and 2 Thessalonians have as their principal theme the return of the Lord Jesus in the end time, the second letter stresses living in the present, and this, as well as its warning against pseudo-Pauline writings, has led some scholars to the conclusions that it too was written by a later disciple of Paul. Since Paul had a number of close associates in his missionary activities, it would hardly be surprising if they used a familiar medium, the apostolic letter, to continue dealing with concrete issues in the churches of the Pauline mission. Although many of the letters unquestionably by Paul are considerably longer than ordinary private letters, they address concrete situations in the churches.

Ephesians, however, lacks not only an address but also references to specific individuals or problems. Among the non-Pauline letters, Hebrews and James also appear to be tractates or general exhortations, rather than letters to specific communities. Jude addresses a sharp apocalyptic warning to Christians in general. First John speaks to concrete problems in its church circles, but lacks the form of a letter; 2 and 3 John are both personal letters, though addressed to different problems. First Peter used the letter form as exhortation for suffering Christians in Asia Minor. Finally, 2 Peter appears to be the latest epistle in the New Testament. It contains a possible allusion to the Gospel account of the Transfiguration (1.16-18; cf. Mk 9.2-8) and to Christians who misinterpret Paul's letters (3.15-16). Like 2 Timothy, 2 Peter is presented as the last testament of an apostle. It affirms the unity of apostolic teaching concerning the Day of the Lord against some who used Paul's authority to deny that God would end the world.

Writing and Sending Letters in Antiquity

Letters from antiquity include imperial decrees addressed to subjects in a particular area, such as that by the emperor Claudius to "the city of Alexandria" in 41 CE concerning Jewish agitation for citizen rights; collections of philosophical letters by prominent figures like Cicero, Pliny, and Seneca; and hundreds of papyri from Egypt documenting the concerns of ordinary people. Royal diplomatic correspondence has its
own formalities of language which are echoed in the so-called letter that the heavenly Christ addresses to the angels of the churches in Revelation 2-3. Philosophical letters often adopt a rhetorical formalism, which indicates that such letters were intended to be preserved for posterity. They are typically longer than private letters, which are generally described as "documentary" to distinguish them from such literary creations. Authors often retained copies of and existed only for the many purposes of the moment, such as dealing with problems at home, urging an absent husband or son to return, reporting on a military posting, pleading for legal redress, engaging in commerce, describing one's circumstances to family or friends, recommending the bearer of the letter to its recipient, and so on.

The existence of so many letters from private individuals does not imply a high right of literacy among craftsmen, traders, or women. A letter could be dictated to a scribe who would be charged with the actual writing. Even those who could write often preferred to employ the services of a scribe (Rom 16.22; Gal 6.11). The letter-carrier or another party might read the letter at its destination and, depending upon the carrier's relationship to the sender, might also interpret the content of the letter. Some documentary letters in Egypt suggest that after the letter has been read in Greek, it will have to be translated into the local dialect so that the women in the sender's audience can understand it.

The formal parts of the ancient letter — to be distinguished from other rhetorical patterns authors of literary epistles might use — are straightforward. The opening or prescript identifies sender(s) and recipient(s) and concludes with a greeting or salutation. Epithets, information about geographical locations, and terms of endearment often expand on individuals named. Paul regularly shifts to a Semitic form of salutation, "grace and peace," expanded with reference to God and Christ Jesus (2 Cor 1.2). When his apostolic authority is an issue between himself and the recipients, that note may be attached as a self-designation (2 Cor 1.1; Rom 1.1-5, a community for which Paul is not an apostle founder). Ancient letters may follow the opening with a formal statement of the sender's wish for the health of the recipients. Such formulas may also be employed to close the letter. Another
common formula expresses the sender's prayer to the gods or thanksgiving on behalf of the recipients. In the Pauline letter type, this conventional way of opening a letter commonly develops into a much longer thanksgiving or blessing section. That section often previews items from the body of the letter that follows.

After the opening formalities, the body of the letter states the actual business or request that is the reason for the letter. The sender may either give information about his own future travel plans or request it about others. Paul usually has such travel reports near the end of his letter-body. Various formulas can be used to conclude the letter. Often greetings are conveyed from or to others not mentioned in the letter-body.

Once the letter was written, the sender had to find a person to convey the letter to its recipient. Often the presence of someone who is on the way to the desired location provides an opportunity for writing. There was no guaranteed overnight global delivery in antiquity! Even letters entrusted to friends for delivery had an uncertain fate. Under the best of circumstances a response was weeks or months away. The sender would ordinarily have retained a copy, and some scholars have suggested that the first collection of Paul's letters was due to the apostle's own editing of his copies of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians. This hypothesis accounts for the start of the process of collecting and editing Pauline letters, but lacking any specific manuscript evidence, it remains speculative.
Introduction

Although, because of its length, it is the first in the letters of the New Testament, Romans was probably the latest of Paul's undisputed letters to be written (see the article, Introduction to the Letters/Epistles in the New Testament). Romans also contains the longest and most complex sustained argument in any of Paul's letters even though it is addressed to Christians he has never met (1.13). For these reasons the letter, especially chs 1-8, has often been read as Paul's theological "last will and testament," a reflection on and a summary of the gospel of salvation in Christ. It was also intended to persuade the Christians of Rome to support Paul's prospective mission to Spain (15.23-24).

Paul wanted more from his readers, however. He meant to proclaim to the Christians of Rome the gospel, "the power of God for salvation" (1.15-16; 15.18-19), and thus to strengthen and encourage them (1.11-12). Romans is, like Paul's other letters, an instrument of moral instruction and exhortation (see 15.14-15).

The letter was occasioned in part by circumstances in Rome during the reign of the emperor Nero (54-68 CE). The greetings in ch 16 include Prisca and Aquila, known from Acts 18.2 as among the Jews expelled from Rome by the emperor Claudius around 49 CE. Their presence in Rome at the time Paul writes may reflect Nero's reversal of his predecessor's edict (Suetonius, Life of Claudius 25.3). The recent return of Jews to the imperial capital, including Jewish Christians like Prisca and Aquila, who had been driven out and probably lost property and community ties during their exile, may well have aroused tensions within Christian house groups in which Gentile believers had become predominant.
Paul's appeal to Gentile Christians in Rome not to "boast" over Jews (11.13-36) comes at the end of chs 9.11, the climax of the letter. Paul's argument responds to an incipient anti-Judaism, already rife among the Roman aristocracy and beginning to penetrate the Christian community as well. Given the recent horror of an anti-Jewish pogrom in Alexandria (38-41 CE), and even more recent tax riots that had turned deadly in nearby Puteoli, Paul is concerned to prevent in Rome the sort of civic disturbance in which the city's minority Jewish population might be especially vulnerable. This is at least one explanation for the notorious exhortation to "be subject to the governing authorities" (13.1-7). Sometimes read as Paul's "theology of the state," these verses stand in tension with his view elsewhere of the "rulers of this age" (1 Cor 2.6-8; 15.24-26; 1 Thess 5.3-11), and with his own willingness to suffer punishment from civil authorities (2 Cor 11.23, 25-27). This teaching is conventional (Wis 6.1-3; 1 Pet 2.13-17; 3.13), and there are other attitudes to civil authorities in the New Testament (Acts 5.29; Rev 13.2, 5, 11-18). These verses may have had a very specific application in preventing further violence against Jews. Similarly, Paul's admonitions regarding the "weak in faith," concerned with the observance of diet and special days (14.1-15.13), may address tensions between Jewish Christians, who would have had such observances, and Gentile Christians, who would not.

The theme of God's "righteousness" (1.17) or "justice" (3.5) resonates throughout the letter. At stake is God's faithfulness in the face human faithlessness, as the rhetorical questions that punctuate the letter show (2.3-4, 21-23; 3.3, 5, 7, 9, 27, 29; 4.1; 6.1-3, 15-16; 7.7, 13; 9.14, 19, 30; 11.1, 11). God's righteousness is manifest in the uncompromising judgment of all impiety and wickedness, and also in unwavering loyalty to the covenant with Israel. Paul wants the Christians of Rome to respect God's integrity in the salvation offered them through the faithful obedience of Jesus (5.6, 18-19; 3.22, 26). Paul's emphasizes God's integrity and justice, now "revealed" (1.17), not in putting up with sin but in dealing with it decisively through the faith of Jesus Christ or one who has faith in Jesus Christ.
Paul is Christ's apostle, obligated to "bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles," among whom he includes his Roman audience (1.1-6). He declares the gospel of God's salvation to all who believe, Jews and Greeks alike, but "to the Jew first" (1.16). The priority of the Jew in God's plan of salvation is an important theme in the letter (3.1-2; 9.1-4). Paul's mission to Gentiles should provoke his fellow Jews to jealousy (11.13-14), perhaps by convincing them that the last days prophesied by Isaiah were at hand (15.12). At last, Paul declares, "all Israel will be saved" (11.26), and all the nations will join Israel in the worship of the one true God (15.7-13).

As he writes, the apostle is about to present to his compatriots in Jerusalem both monetary aid from churches in his mission field (15.25-27) and an embassy of converts from paganism (1 Cor 16.3-4; on the eventual catastrophe of this mission, see Acts 21.27-30). Although the Roman Christians have not had the opportunity to contribute to this mission in tangible ways, Paul asks for their prayers (15.30-32). He also writes to safeguard the sanctity of the "offering of the Gentiles" (15.15-16) by exhorting the Christians of Rome to holy living (12.1-3; 15.7-9).

The underlying structure of Paul's exhortation resembles other letters written to congregations Paul had founded. By virtue of their baptism into Christ, Christians must no longer let sin have dominion over them (6.1-14). They are to live no longer as the pagan world does (1.18-32), but to give "spiritual worship" to God through sobriety of thought and bodily purity (12.1-3). Just so Paul had reminded the Corinthians, Galatians, and Thessalonians that they must no longer live as "the Gentiles who do not know God," having been sanctified by Christ (1 Cor 6.9-11; Gal 5.22-24; 1 Thess 4.1-5).

Universal accountability before God, Paul's theme throughout the early chapters of the letter, is more specifically applied in chs 12-16. Rather than being a treatise on Christian salvation, Romans is a sustained appeal for holy living, directed to Gentile Christians tempted to look down on their beleaguered Jewish neighbors, within the Christian congregations and without. The apostle's call to realize in common life the justice of God which the Christian congregation celebrates is the letter's enduring legacy.
Salutation

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, 3 the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh 4 and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, 5 through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, 6 including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

7 To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed throughout the world. 9 For God, whom I serve with my spirit by announcing the gospel of his Son, is my witness that without ceasing I remember you always in my prayers, 10 asking that by God's will I may somehow at last succeed in coming to you. 11 For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you — 12 or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine. 13 I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as I have among the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish 15 — hence my eagerness to proclaim the gospel to you also who are in Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."
An indictment of human wickedness and injustice

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse; 21 for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools; 23 and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.

28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done. 29 They were filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, covetousness, malice. Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, craftiness, they are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, rebellious toward parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 They know God's decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die — yet they not only do them but even applaud others who practice them.
[Romans 2]
All are accountable before God for their works

1 Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things. 2 You say, "We know that God's judgment on those who do such things is in accordance with truth." 3 Do you imagine, whoever you are, that when you judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? 5 But by your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 For he will repay according to each one's deeds: 7 to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 while for those who are self-seeking and who obey not the truth but wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. 9 There will be anguish and distress for everyone who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. 11 For God shows no partiality.

12 All who have sinned apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight, but the doers of the law who will be justified. 14 When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. 15 They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.

Does being a Jew relieve one from accountability to God?

17 But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast of your relation to God 18 and know his will and determine what is best
because you are instructed in the law, 19 and if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth, 21 you, then, that teach others, will you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? 22 You that forbid adultery, do you commit adultery? You that abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You that boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? 24 For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

25 Circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law; but if you break the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. 26 So, if those who are uncircumcised keep the requirements of the law, will not their uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? 27 Then those who are physically uncircumcised but keep the law will condemn you that have the written code and circumcision but break the law. 28 For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is true circumcision something external and physical. 29 Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart — it is spiritual and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God.

[Romans 3]
God's integrity in the covenant with Israel

1 Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? 2 Much, in every way. For in the first place the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. 3 What if some were unfaithful? Will their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? 4 By no means! Although everyone is a liar, let God be proved true, as it is written, "So that you may be justified in your words, and prevail in your judging."

5 But if our injustice serves to confirm the justice of God, what should we say? That God is unjust to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) 6 By no means! For then how could God judge the world? 7 But if through my falsehood God's truthfulness abounds to his glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner? 8 And why not say (as some people slander us by saying that we say), "Let us do evil so that good may come"? Their condemnation is deserved!
The universality of God's judgment

9 What then? Are we any better off? No, not at all; for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, 10 as it is written:

"There is no one who is righteous, not even one;
there is no one who has understanding,
there is no one who seeks God.

12 All have turned aside, together they have become worthless;
there is no one who shows kindness,
there is not even one."

13 "Their throats are opened graves;
they use their tongues to deceive."

"The venom of vipers is under their lips."

14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."

15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;
ruin and misery are in their paths,
and the way of peace they have not known."

16 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For "no human being will be justified in his sight" by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

The revelation of God's judgment

21 But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, 22 the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, 23 since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; 24 they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; 26 it
was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

27 Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. 28 For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since God is one; and he will justify the circumcised on the ground of faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. 31 Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.

[Romans 4]
Abraham as a test case

1 What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." 4 Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. 5 But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness. 6 So also David speaks of the blessedness of those to whom God reckons righteousness apart from works:

7 "Blessed are those whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered;
8 blessed is the one against whom the Lord will not reckon sin."

9 Is this blessedness, then, pronounced only on the circumcised, or also on the uncircumcised? We say, "Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness." 10 How then was it reckoned to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. 11 He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the ancestor of all who believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them, 12 and likewise the ancestor of the circumcised who are not only
circumcised but who also follow the example of the faith that our ancestor Abraham had before he was circumcised.

13 For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. 14 If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. 15 For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

The example of Abraham's faith

16 For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, 17 as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") — in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. 18 Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. 20 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." 23 Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

[Romans 5]
The nature of justification in Christ

1 Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of
sharing the glory of God. 3 And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. 8 But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. 9 Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. 11 But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Adam and Christ

12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned — 13 sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. 14 Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come. 15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man’s trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. 16 And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. 17 If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.
18 Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, so one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all. 19 For just as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. 20 But law came in, with the result that the trespass multiplied; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, just as sin exercised dominion in death, so grace might also exercise dominion through justification leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[Romans 6]
Life in Christ requires obedience

1 What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For whoever has died is freed from sin. 8 But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. 13 No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.
15 What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! 16 Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, 18 and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

20 When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. 22 But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[Romans 7]  
The law's poisonous interaction with sin

1 Do you not know, brothers and sisters — for I am speaking to those who know the law — that the law is binding on a person only during that person's lifetime? 2 Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies, she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. 3 Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man, she is not an adulteress.

4 In the same way, my friends, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 While we were living in the flesh, our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death. 6 But now
we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we are slaves not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit.

7 What then should we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." 8 But sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead. 9 I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived 10 and I died, and the very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. 11 For sin, seizing an opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.

13 Did what is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure.

Even the disobedient acknowledge the rightness of the law's verdict

14 For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am of the flesh, sold into slavery under sin. 15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. 17 But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, 23 but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24
Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?  
25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

[Romans 8]  
Life in the Spirit

1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.  
2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.  
3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,  
4 so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.  
5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit.  
6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.  
7 For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law — indeed it cannot,  
8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.  
10 But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.  
11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

12 So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh —  
13 for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.  
14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.  
15 For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba!

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Father!" 16 it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ — if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

Suffering, and hope in God's promise

18 I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; 20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; 23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. 27 And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

28 We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

31 What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? 33 Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34
Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. 35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

[Romans 9]
The certainty of God's purposes toward Israel

1 I am speaking the truth in Christ — I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit — 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. 4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; 5 to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

God's right to choose

6 It is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all Israelites truly belong to Israel, 7 and not all of Abraham's children are his true descendants; but "It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you." 8 This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as descendants. 9 For this is what the promise said, "About this time I will return and Sarah shall have a son." 10 Nor is that all; something similar happened to Rebecca when she had conceived children by one husband, our ancestor Isaac. 11 Even before they had been born or had done anything good or bad (so that God's purpose of election might
continue, 12 not by works but by his call) she was told, "The elder shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written,

"I have loved Jacob,
    but I have hated Esau."

14 What then are we to say? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! 15 For he says to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
    and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

16 So it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God who shows mercy. 17 For the scripture says to Pharaoh, "I have raised you up for the very purpose of showing my power in you, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth." 18 So then he has mercy on whomever he chooses, and he hardens the heart of whomever he chooses.

19 You will say to me then, "Why then does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" 20 But who indeed are you, a human being, to argue with God? Will what is molded say to the one who molds it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one object for special use and another for ordinary use? 22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath that are made for destruction; 23 and what if he has done so in order to make known the riches of his glory for the objects of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory — 24 including us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? 25 As indeed he says in Hosea,

"Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,'
    and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'"

26 "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,'

    there they shall be called children of the living God."

27 And Isaiah cries out concerning Israel, "Though the number of the children of Israel were like the sand of the sea, only a remnant of them will be saved; 28 for the Lord will execute his sentence on the earth quickly and decisively." 29 And as Isaiah predicted,
"If the Lord of hosts had not left survivors to us, 
we would have fared like Sodom 
and been made like Gomorrah."

What went wrong?

30 What then are we to say? Gentiles, who did not strive for righteousness, have attained it, that is, righteousness through faith; 31 but Israel, who did strive for the righteousness that is based on the law, did not succeed in fulfilling that law. 32 Why not? Because they did not strive for it on the basis of faith, but as if it were based on works. They have stumbled over the stumbling stone, 33 as it is written, "See, I am laying in Zion a stone that will make people stumble, a rock that will make them fall, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

[Romans 10]

1 Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. 2 I can testify that they have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. 3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking to establish their own, they have not submitted to God's righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

5 Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that "the person who does these things will live by them." 6 But the righteousness that comes from faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. 11 The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put
to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. 13 For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

14 But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? 15 And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" 16 But not all have obeyed the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" 17 So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

18 But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have; for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."
19 Again I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry."
20 Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."
21 But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

[Romans 11]
God has preserved a remnant

1 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. Do you not know what the scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? 3 "Lord, they have killed your prophets, they have demolished your altars; I alone am left, and they are seeking my life." 4 But what is the divine reply to him? "I have kept for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal." 5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace. 6 But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace.
7 What then? Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, 8 as it is written, "God gave them a sluggish spirit, eyes that would not see and ears that would not hear, down to this very day."

9 And David says, "Let their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them; let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and keep their backs forever bent."

11 So I ask, have they stumbled so as to fall? By no means! But through their stumbling salvation has come to the Gentiles, so as to make Israel jealous. 12 Now if their stumbling means riches for the world, and if their defeat means riches for Gentiles, how much more will their full inclusion mean!

A warning to the Gentile Christians of Rome

13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry 14 in order to make my own people jealous, and thus save some of them. 15 For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead! 16 If the part of the dough offered as first fruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; and if the root is holy, then the branches also are holy.

The metaphor of the olive tree

17 But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the rich root of the olive tree, 18 do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember that it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. 19 You will say, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." 20 That is true. They were broken off because of their unbelief, but you stand only through faith. So do not become proud, but stand in awe. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, perhaps he
will not spare you. 22 Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness toward you, provided you continue in his kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. 23 And even those of Israel, if they do not persist in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God has the power to graft them in again. 24 For if you have been cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these natural branches be grafted back into their own olive tree.

The hardening of Israel

25 So that you may not claim to be wiser than you are, brothers and sisters, I want you to understand this mystery: a hardening has come upon part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved; as it is written, "Out of Zion will come the Deliverer; he will banish ungodliness from Jacob." 27 "And this is my covenant with them, when I take away their sins."

28 As regards the gospel they are enemies of God for your sake; but as regards election they are beloved, for the sake of their ancestors; 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, 31 so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. 32 For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

33 O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"

35 "Or who has given a gift to him, to receive a gift in return?"

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.
[Romans 12]
Exhortation to holy living

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect.

3 For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 4 For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. 6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; 7 ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8 the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Goodwill within the community and without

9 Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; 10 love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. 18 If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." 20 No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give
them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

[Romans 13]
Subjection to governing authorities

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; 4 for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience. 6 For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, busy with this very thing. 7 Pay to all what is due them — taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

Other exhortations

8 Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

11 Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; 12 the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; 13 let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. 14
Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

[Romans 14]
Exhortations regarding those who observe Torah; tolerance for others' observance

1 Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. 2 Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. 3 Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. 4 Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

5 Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. 6 Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

7 We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. 8 If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For it is written,
   "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."
12 So then, each of us will be accountable to God.
Freedom is not license to give offense

13 Let us therefore no longer pass judgment on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another. 14 I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. 15 If your brother or sister is being injured by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. Do not let what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died. 16 So do not let your good be spoken of as evil. 17 For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 The one who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and has human approval. 19 Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. 20 Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for you to make others fall by what you eat; 21 it is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble. 22 The faith that you have, have as your own conviction before God. Blessed are those who have no reason to condemn themselves because of what they approve. 23 But those who have doubts are condemned if they eat, because they do not act from faith; for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

[Romans 15]

Christ's example

1 We who are strong ought to put up with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Each of us must please our neighbor for the good purpose of building up the neighbor. 3 For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. 5 May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, 6 so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. 8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of
the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, 9 and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name";

10 and again he says,

"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people";

11 and again,

"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him";

12 and again Isaiah says,

"The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope."

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The letter's argument brought to a close; the broader context of Paul's apostolate

14 I myself feel confident about you, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another. 15 Nevertheless on some points I have written to you rather boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God 16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 17 In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast of my work for God. 18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, 19 by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ. 20 Thus I make it my ambition to proclaim the good news, not where Christ has already been named, so that I do not build on someone else's foundation, 21 but as it is written,

"Those who have never been told of him shall see, and those who have never heard of him shall understand."
22 This is the reason that I have so often been hindered from coming to you. 23 But now, with no further place for me in these regions, I desire, as I have for many years, to come to you 24 when I go to Spain. For I do hope to see you on my journey and to be sent on by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little while. 25 At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem in a ministry to the saints; 26 for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. 27 They were pleased to do this, and indeed they owe it to them; for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material things. 28 So, when I have completed this, and have delivered to them what has been collected, I will set out by way of you to Spain; 29 and I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ.

Apprehensions regarding Jerusalem

30 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf, 31 that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, and that my ministry to Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and be refreshed in your company. 33 The God of peace be with all of you. Amen.

[Romans 16]
A recommendation and greetings

1 I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, 2 so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.

3 Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, 4 and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. 6 Greet Mary, who has worked very hard among you. 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they
are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. 8 Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. 10 Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. 11 Greet my relative Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. 12 Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. 13 Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and greet his mother — a mother to me also. 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. 15 Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

A warning

17 I urge you, brothers and sisters, to keep an eye on those who cause dissensions and offenses, in opposition to the teaching that you have learned; avoid them. 18 For such people do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the simple-minded. 19 For while your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, I want you to be wise in what is good and guileless in what is evil. 20 The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

21 Timothy, my co-worker, greets you; so do Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my relatives.

22 I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord.

23 Gaius, who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus, greet you.
A concluding blessing

25 Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith — 27 to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.
1 CORINTHIANS

Introduction

First Corinthians offers a fascinating window onto the struggles of one community of the movement that developed into Christianity. Paul's attempts to persuade them to see and do things his way reveals just how difficult it was for people rooted in the Hellenistic culture of a large metropolis such as Corinth to assimilate Paul's gospel of Christ and its implications for personal and community life and for their relations with the larger Roman imperial society.

The city of Corinth had been punitively destroyed by the Romans in 146 BCE, but then rebuilt in 44 BCE as a colony to which the Roman patricians sent the "dregs" of the surplus population from Rom itself, such as recently manumitted slaves and displaced peasants. Corinth quickly developed into a busy hub of east-west trade in the empire and the center of Roman imperial culture in Greece. Except for Antioch in Syria, where Paul was based at the very beginning of his mission to various people of the eastern Mediterranean, Corinth was the first major urban center to which Paul brought his mission. For eighteen months, with several coworkers such as Timothy and Silvanus, Prisca (Priscilla) and her husband Aquila, and Phoebe, leader of the community at nearby Cenchreae, he organized and taught in several house-assemblies of Corinthians who came together periodically as a "whole assembly" (church) to celebrate the Lord's Supper. After he moved across the Aegean Sea to work in the city of Ephesus, another missionary, Apollos, an eloquent Hellenistic Jew from Alexandria in Egypt, also taught in the community at Corinth.

In dictating 1 Corinthians (from Ephesus, 16.8), Paul was responding both to a letter from the Corinthians asking questions about several issues (see 7.1; 8.1; 12.1) and to news he had received through "Chloe's people" of some serious conflicts in the Corinthian community. The
letter begins with the usual address, greeting, and opening thanksgiving (1.1-9) and ends with the standard closing exhortation, greetings, and grace (16.13-24). The body of the letter consists of a series of arguments on key issues over which the Corinthian community has come into conflict: divisions within the community connected with devotion to wisdom (1.10-4.21); how to deal with a man living with his stepmother (ch 5); on not taking disputes to the official courts (ch 6); on marriage and sexual relations (6.12-7.40); on eating food sacrificed to idols (8.1-11.1); on hair arrangement when prophesying (11.2-16); on procedure at celebration of the LORD's Supper (11.17-34); on the use of spiritual gifts, particularly "tongues" (chs 12-14); on the resurrection of the dead (ch 15); and finally on the collection for Jerusalem and Paul's travel plans (16.1-12).

The language Paul uses and the issues he deals with in 1 Corinthians are very different from those in his other letters. That suggests that the views he addresses in 1 Corinthians were distinctive to the Corinthians among the various communities Paul founded (and perhaps had something to do with Apollos's ministry in Corinth after Paul had gone to Ephesus). Indeed, it appears from the way Paul uses some of these distinctive terms that some of the Corinthians understood themselves as "spiritual" and "mature," as opposed to merely "unspiritual" or "physical" and "infants" (2.6, 14-15; 3.1; 15.44, 46) and as "wise," "powerful," "of noble birth," "rich," and "kings," as opposed to "fools," "weak," etc. (1.26; 4.8), apparently because of their possession of "wisdom" as the agent or substance of salvation, a religious self-understanding known from contemporary Jewish communities in Alexandria, where Apollos came from. Throughout 1 Corinthians Paul appears to be responding to what certain Corinthians were thinking and doing, and at several points in his major arguments he even uses their language and slogans.

Paul's arguments in 1 Corinthians were not immediately effective, as is evident from the continuing conflicts he had with the Corinthians in various sections of 2 Corinthians (see Introduction to 2 Corinthians). Paul's arguments in 1 Corinthians, however, contain some of the earliest traditions of believers in Christ, such as the words of institution for the LORD's Supper (11.23-26) and the basic creed of Christ's
crucifixion and resurrection (15.3-5). First Corinthians also contains Paul's most insistent emphasis on the cross of Christ (1.18-2.9), and his most extensive discussion of the resurrection of the dead (ch 15). Moreover, Paul's use of the Corinthians' language in attempting to persuade them to his viewpoint resulted in formulations that provided key bases for subsequent Christian belief and practices. In 1 Corinthians are the only statements among Paul's genuine letters in which Christ appears to be a preexistent figure (8.6; 10.4). Only in 1 Corinthians does Paul deal with issues such as sex and marriage and spiritual gifts such as glossolalia (speaking in "tongues"). Given the ways that subsequent generations of Christians have understood them, Paul's formulations in ch 7 in particular became a basis for Christian sexual asceticism and one of the texts used to legitimate the practice of slavery. Passages in 1 Corinthians (11.2-17; 14.34-36), moreover, became some of the principal bases on which women were subordinated in the patriarchal family and church. And it is in 1 Corinthians that Paul composes the famous "hymn to love" as part of his argument for solidarity of the community as the "body of Christ" (ch 13 as part of the argument in chs 12-14), and his almost ecstatic vision of the dramatic parousia, the coming of Christ and the resurrection of believers, "at the last trumpet" (15.51-55).

[1 Corinthians 1]
Salutation

1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

2 To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Thanksgiving

4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, 5 for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind — 6 just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you — 7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul's first major argument, for unity

10 Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. 11 For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. 12 What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." 13 Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

The contrast of Christ crucified with "heavenly" wisdom

18 For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the
world? 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. 22 For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, 23 but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 25 For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

26 Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, 29 so that no one might boast in the presence of God. 30 He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

[1 Corinthians 2]

1 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

**Spiritual wisdom is not for infants**

6 Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. 7 But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. 8 None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But, as it is written,
"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, 
nor the human heart conceived, 
what God has prepared for those who love him" —
10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. 13 And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

14 Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. 15 Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. 16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?"
But we have the mind of Christ.

[1 Corinthians 3]

1 And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people, but rather as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. 2 I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, 3 for you are still of the flesh. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving according to human inclinations? 4 For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not merely human?

Warnings about Apollos

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither the one who plants
nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the
growth. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have a
common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor
of each. 9 For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's
field, God's building.

10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master
builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each
builder must choose with care how to build on it. 11 For no one can lay
any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation
is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold,
silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw — 13 the work of each builder
will become visible, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be
revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has
done. 14 If what has been built on the foundation survives, the builder
will receive a reward. 15 If the work is burned up, the builder will suffer
loss; the builder will be saved, but only as through fire.

16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit
dwells in you? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that
person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

18 Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age,
you should become fools so that you may become wise. 19 For the
wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written,
"He catches the wise in their craftiness,"
20 and again,
"The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise,
that they are futile."
21 So let no one boast about human leaders. For all things are yours, 22
whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the
present or the future — all belong to you, 23 and you belong to Christ,
and Christ belongs to God.
1 Corinthians 4

Paul's defense

1 Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. 2 Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. 4 I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.

6 I have applied all this to Apollos and myself for your benefit, brothers and sisters, so that you may learn through us the meaning of the saying, "Nothing beyond what is written," so that none of you will be puffed up in favor of one against another. 7 For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift?

8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! Quite apart from us you have become kings! Indeed, I wish that you had become kings, so that we might be kings with you! 9 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals. 10 We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. 11 To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, 12 and we grow weary from the work of our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; 13 when slandered, we speak kindly. We have become like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things, to this very day.

14 I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 I appeal to you, then,
be imitators of me. 17 For this reason I sent you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ Jesus, as I teach them everywhere in every church. 18 But some of you, thinking that I am not coming to you, have become arrogant. 19 But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. 20 For the kingdom of God depends not on talk but on power. 21 What would you prefer? Am I to come to you with a stick, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?

[1 Corinthians 5]
The need for community discipline

1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife. 2 And you are arrogant! Should you not rather have mourned, so that he who has done this would have been removed from among you?

3 For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present I have already pronounced judgment 4 in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 you are to hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

6 Your boasting is not a good thing. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? 7 Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral persons — 10 not at all meaning the immoral of this world, or the greedy and robbers, or idolaters, since you would then need to go out of the world. 11 But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother or sister who is sexually immoral or greedy, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or robber. Do
not even eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging those outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge? 13 God will judge those outside. "Drive out the wicked person from among you."

[1 Corinthians 6]
Lawsuits

1 When any of you has a grievance against another, do you dare to take it to court before the unrighteous, instead of taking it before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we are to judge angels — to say nothing of ordinary matters? 4 If you have ordinary cases, then, do you appoint as judges those who have no standing in the church? 5 I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to decide between one believer and another, 6 but a believer goes to court against a believer — and before unbelievers at that?

7 In fact, to have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? 8 But you yourselves wrong and defraud — and believers at that.

9 Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, 10 thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers — none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And this is what some of you used to be. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Sexual sins

12 "All things are lawful for me," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. 13 "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food," and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is meant not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God
raised the Lord and will also raise us by his power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, "The two shall be one flesh." 17 But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.

[1 Corinthians 7]
Discussion of marriage and sexual relations

1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is well for a man not to touch a woman." 2 But because of cases of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. 3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6 This I say by way of concession, not of command. 7 I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has a particular gift from God, one having one kind and another a different kind.

8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is well for them to remain unmarried as I am. 9 But if they are not practicing self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.

10 To the married I give this command — not I but the Lord — that the wife should not separate from her husband 11 (but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and
that the husband should not divorce his wife.

12 To the rest I say — I and not the Lord — that if any believer has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13 And if any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. 15 But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. It is to peace that God has called you. 16 Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife.

17 However that may be, let each of you lead the life that the Lord has assigned, to which God called you. This is my rule in all the churches. 18 Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. 19 Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but obeying the commandments of God is everything. 20 Let each of you remain in the condition in which you were called.

21 Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever. 22 For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ. 23 You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters. 24 In whatever condition you were called, brothers and sisters, there remain with God.

25 Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. 26 I think that, in view of the impending crisis, it is well for you to remain as you are. 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 But if you marry, you do not sin, and if a virgin marries, she does not sin. Yet those who marry will experience distress in this life, and I would spare you that. 29 I mean,
brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, 30 and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, 31 and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to please the Lord; 33 but the married man is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please his wife, 34 and his interests are divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin are anxious about the affairs of the Lord, so that they may be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about the affairs of the world, how to please her husband. 35 I say this for your own benefit, not to put any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and unhindered devotion to the Lord.

36 If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his fiancée, if his passions are strong, and so it has to be, let him marry as he wishes; it is no sin. Let them marry. 37 But if someone stands firm in his resolve, being under no necessity but having his own desire under control, and has determined in his own mind to keep her as his fiancée, he will do well. 38 So then, he who marries his fiancée does well; and he who refrains from marriage will do better.

39 A wife is bound as long as her husband lives. But if the husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, only in the Lord. 40 But in my judgment she is more blessed if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

[1 Corinthians 8]
Argument concerning food offered to idols

1 Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that "all of us possess knowledge." Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. 2 Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; 3 but anyone who loves God is known by him.
4 Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that "no idol in the world really exists," and that "there is no God but one." 5 Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth — as in fact there are many gods and many lords — 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

7 It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8 "Food will not bring us close to God." We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. 9 But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? 11 So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. 12 But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

[1 Corinthians 9]
Paul's rights and his freedom not to exercise them

1 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2 If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

3 This is my defense to those who would examine me. 4 Do we not have the right to our food and drink? 5 Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? 6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? 7 Who at any time pays the expenses for doing military service? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not get any of its milk?
8 Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law also say the same? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? 10 Or does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was indeed written for our sake, for whoever plows should plow in hope and whoever threshes should thresh in hope of a share in the crop. 11 If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? 12 If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we still more?

Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ. 13 Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is sacrificed on the altar? 14 In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.

15 But I have made no use of any of these rights, nor am I writing this so that they may be applied in my case. Indeed, I would rather die than that — no one will deprive me of my ground for boasting! 16 If I proclaim the gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting, for an obligation is laid on me, and woe to me if I do not proclaim the gospel! 17 For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission. 18 What then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation I may make the gospel free of charge, so as not to make full use of my rights in the gospel.

19 For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. 20 To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. 21 To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.
24 Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. 25 Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. 26 So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; 27 but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

[1 Corinthians 10]
Warning that the Corinthians are risking God's wrath

1 I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 and all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, and they were struck down in the wilderness.

6 Now these things occurred as examples for us, so that we might not desire evil as they did. 7 Do not become idolaters as some of them did; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and they rose up to play." 8 We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. 9 We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did, and were destroyed by serpents. 10 And do not complain as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 These things happened to them to serve as an example, and they were written down to instruct us, on whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 So if you think you are standing, watch out that you do not fall. 13 No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.
Prohibition of eating food offered to idols

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. 15 I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 18 Consider the people of Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices partners in the altar? 19 What do I imply then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be partners with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 22 Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

Responsibility to others

23 "All things are lawful," but not all things are beneficial. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. 24 Do not seek your own advantage, but that of the other. 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience, 26 for "the earth and its fullness are the LORD's." 27 If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience — 29 I mean the other's conscience, not your own. For why should my liberty be subject to the judgment of someone else's conscience? 30 If I partake with thankfulness, why should I be denounced because of that for which I give thanks?

31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. 32 Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, so that they may be saved. [1 Corinthians 11] 1 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.
[1 Corinthians 11]
Argument concerning hairstyles

2 I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you. 3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ. 4 Any man who prays or prophesies with something on his head disgraces his head, 5 but any woman who prays or prophesies with her head unveiled disgraces her head — it is one and the same thing as having her head shaved. 6 For if a woman will not veil herself, then she should cut off her hair; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or to be shaved, she should wear a veil. 7 For a man ought not to have his head veiled, since he is the image and reflection of God; but woman is the reflection of man. 8 Indeed, man was not made from woman, but woman from man. 9 Neither was man created for the sake of woman, but woman for the sake of man. 10 For this reason a woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man or man independent of woman. 12 For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman; but all things come from God. 13 Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head unveiled? 14 Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair, it is degrading to him, 15 but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering. 16 But if anyone is disposed to be contentious — we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

17 Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when you come together it is not for the better but for the worse. 18 For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. 19 Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine. 20 When you come together, it is not really to eat the LORD's supper. 21 For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. 22 What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and
humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!

23 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be answerable for the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Examine yourselves, and only then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For all who eat and drink without discerning the body, eat and drink judgment against themselves. 30 For this reason many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

33 So then, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34 If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give instructions when I come.

[1 Corinthians 12]
Discrimination among spiritual gifts

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2 You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. 3 Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.
Variety in the community

4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8 To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

14 Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many members, yet one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; 24 whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, 25 that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may
have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 28 And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

[1 Corinthians 13]
Praising love

1 If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

4 Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. 9 For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; 10 but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. 13
And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

[1 Corinthians 14]

Advocating prophecy

1 Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy. 2 For those who speak in a tongue do not speak to other people but to God; for nobody understands them, since they are speaking mysteries in the Spirit. 3 On the other hand, those who prophesy speak to other people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. 4 Those who speak in a tongue build up themselves, but those who prophesy build up the church. 5 Now I would like all of you to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. One who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

6 Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I speak to you in some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? 7 It is the same way with lifeless instruments that produce sound, such as the flute or the harp. If they do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is being played? 8 And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? 9 So with yourselves; if in a tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is being said? For you will be speaking into the air. 10 There are doubtless many different kinds of sounds in the world, and nothing is without sound. 11 If then I do not know the meaning of a sound, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. 12 So with yourselves; since you are eager for spiritual gifts, strive to excel in them for building up the church.

13 Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unproductive. 15 What should I do then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing praise with the spirit, but I will sing praise with the mind also. 16 Otherwise, if you say a blessing with the spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say the
"Amen" to your thanksgiving, since the outsider does not know what you are saying? 17 For you may give thanks well enough, but the other person is not built up. 18 I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you; 19 nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

20 Brothers and sisters, do not be children in your thinking; rather, be infants in evil, but in thinking be adults. 21 In the law it is written,

"By people of strange tongues
and by the lips of foreigners
I will speak to this people;
yet even then they will not listen to me,"
says the Lord. 22 Tongues, then, are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers. 23 If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your mind? 24 But if all prophesy, an unbeliever or outsider who enters is reproved by all and called to account by all. 25 After the secrets of the unbeliever's heart are disclosed, that person will bow down before God and worship him, declaring, "God is really among you."

26 What should be done then, my friends? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. 27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. 28 But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. 30 If a revelation is made to someone else sitting nearby, let the first person be silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of prophets are subject to the prophets, 33 for God is a God not of disorder but of peace.

(As in all the churches of the saints, 34 women should be silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as the law also says. 35 If there is anything they desire to
know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. 36 Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only ones it has reached?)

37 Anyone who claims to be a prophet, or to have spiritual powers, must acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. 38 Anyone who does not recognize this is not to be recognized. 39 So, my friends, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; 40 but all things should be done decently and in order.

[1 Corinthians 15]
Arguments for the resurrection; the proclamation of Christ's death and resurrection

1 Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, 2 through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you — unless you have come to believe in vain.

3 For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, 4 and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. 6 Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them — though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. 11 Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.
The reality of the resurrection of the dead

12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. 15 We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ — whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. 17 If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 18 Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. 19 If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. 21 For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; 22 for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. 23 But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27 For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "All things are put in subjection," it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. 28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.

29 Otherwise, what will those people do who receive baptism on behalf of the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized on their behalf?

30 And why are we putting ourselves in danger every hour? 31 I die every day! That is as certain, brothers and sisters, as my boasting of you — a boast that I make in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 If with merely human
hopes I fought with wild animals at Ephesus, what would I have gained by it? If the dead are not raised,
   "Let us eat and drink,
      for tomorrow we die."
33 Do not be deceived:
   "Bad company ruins good morals."

34 Come to a sober and right mind, and sin no more; for some people have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

With what kind of body?

35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" 36 Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. 39 Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for human beings, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory.

42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 Thus it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 But it is not the spiritual that is first, but the physical, and then the spiritual. 47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. 49 Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.
50 What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51 Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

"Death has been swallowed up in victory."
55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"
56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

[1 Corinthians 16]
The collection, travel plans, and Apollos

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints: you should follow the directions I gave to the churches of Galatia. 2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come. 3 And when I arrive, I will send any whom you approve with letters to take your gift to Jerusalem. 4 If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me.

5 I will visit you after passing through Macedonia — for I intend to pass through Macedonia — 6 and perhaps I will stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may send me on my way, wherever I go. 7 I do not want to see you now just in passing, for I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will stay in Ephesus until
Pentecost, 9 for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

10 If Timothy comes, see that he has nothing to fear among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord just as I am; 11 therefore let no one despise him. Send him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me; for I am expecting him with the brothers.

12 Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to visit you with the other brothers, but he was not at all willing to come now. He will come when he has the opportunity.

Conclusion

13 Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. 14 Let all that you do be done in love.

15 Now, brothers and sisters, you know that members of the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; 16 I urge you to put yourselves at the service of such people, and of everyone who works and toils with them. 17 I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence; 18 for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. So give recognition to such persons.

19 The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, greet you warmly in the Lord. 20 All the brothers and sisters send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. 22 Let anyone be accursed who has no love for the Lord. Our Lord, come! 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. 24 My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.
Introduction

First and Second Corinthians are not the only letters Paul wrote to Corinth, and an examination of the sequence of events behind these letters gives an indication of the tensions in the relationship between Paul and the Corinthian church. Although the exact events cannot all be recovered from the materials in the New Testament, they can reasonably be reconstructed as follows.

After Paul founded the church at Corinth (2 Cor 1.19; see also Acts 18.1-7, esp. v. 5), the congregation wrote to him at least once (1 Cor 7.1), and Paul also wrote them a letter, now lost, which is mentioned in 1 Cor 5.9. Then Paul wrote 1 Corinthians while he was in Ephesus (1 Cor 16.8). Timothy had worked with Paul in Corinth (Acts 18.5), and at some time after that, Paul sent Timothy to Corinth as his personal emissary (1 Cor 4.17; 16.10-11), but Timothy returned with news that a group of Jewish-Christian missionaries had arrived at Corinth and might be undermining Paul's teaching and his apostolic authority. Paul refers to these missionaries ironically as "super-apostles" (2 Cor 11.5; 12.11), "false apostles" (11.13) and even "Satan's ministers" (11.15). This challenge to his missionary activity prompted Paul to visit Corinth a second time. The result was unfortunate: Evidently a member of the congregation offended him grievously (2.5-6); he later called this the "painful visit" (2.1; 7.2). After his bitter departure, Paul wrote what he called the "letter of tears" (2.4; 7.8), a letter that is now lost. Either despite or because of its severity, this letter evidently succeeded in persuading the majority of the church to Paul's position, as Titus reported when he met Paul in Macedonia (7.6-7). Paul, much relieved at the resolution of the conflict, wrote a conciliatory letter than may include 1.1-2.13; 7.5-16, and probably other parts, now lost. In addition, Paul sent two letters on the collection for the poor in the Jerusalem church (chs 8-9). Paul's confidence in the resolution was premature, however, for he later had
to write a bitter polemical letter directed against the "super-apostles" (chs 10-13).

Thus, 2 Corinthians as it now stands seems to be a composite of fragments from different letters, though their precise extent and relative chronology are open to question. For example, in 2.13 the narrative at this point drops Paul's anxious wait for Titus and resumes in 7.5; in 6.14-7.1 an abrupt interruption of Paul's appeal in the present context, since 7.2-4 more naturally follows 6.11-13. This passage contains many words (e.g., "mismatched" and "partnership") used nowhere else by Paul; the stark dualism is also uncharacteristic of him. Some scholars hold that chapters 8 and 9 are two separate letters to two different regions in Achaia. Chapter 9 starts the appeal for the collection afresh as if ch 8 had not preceded it. In 9.2, Macedonia, in contrast to 8.1, now has to listen to Paul's boasting of the achievements of the Achaian churches (see also v. 4) in contrast to the unfinished state of the Corinthian collection (8.10-11). Finally, the ironic and polemical tone of chs 10-13 contrasts sharply with that of the preceding chapters. Paul no longer refers to his opponents indirectly (see 2.17; 5.12), but pointedly. For these reasons, many take chs 10-13 to be a fragment of another letter.

This disjointed character underscores the difficulty of reading the letter as a coherent whole. After a standard salutation (1.1-2), Paul moves to a characteristic blessing of God and a thanksgiving for consoling his afflictions (1.3-7) and delivering him (1.8-11). He then dwells on his relationship with the Corinthians (1.12-2.13), but after a conciliatory passage and before he finishes recounting his travel plans (2.5-13) he enters into an argumentative discourse (2.14-5.21) that ends in an anxious appeal for reconciliation (6.1-13; 7.2-4 [6.14-7.1 appears to be parenthetical]). Thereafter the travelogue resumes, as does the earlier conciliatory theme, and Paul concludes by expressing his complete confidence in the Corinthians (7.5-16). Two chapters (8 and 9) on the collection for the poor in the Jerusalem church (1 Cor 16.1-4; see also Gal 2.10) may be two separate letters, one to Corinth and on to Achaia (compare 8.1 to 9.2). Finally a highly charged polemical letter (10.1-13.10) ends with a farewell and Paul's fullest benediction (13.11-13).
Certain motifs run through the letter. The paradoxical relationship between affliction and consolation, first raised in 1.3-11, is the backbone of the arguments in 4.7-10; 4.16-5.10; and 12.7-10. The twin themes of boasting and confidence intimated in 1-12-14 stand in the background in 3.4-18; 8.1-7, 24; 9.1-5; and all of chs 10-13.

[2 Corinthians 1]
Salutation

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
   To the church of God that is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout Achaia:
2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul blesses God for rescuing him and consoling his afflictions

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, 4 who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. 5 For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. 6 If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. 7 Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

God delivers Paul

8 We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had
received the sentence of death so that we would rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. 10 He who rescued us from so deadly a peril will continue to rescue us; on him we have set our hope that he will rescue us again, 11 as you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

**Paul stresses his bond with the Corinthians**

12 Indeed, this is our boast, the testimony of our conscience: we have behaved in the world with frankness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God — and all the more toward you. 13 For we write you nothing other than what you can read and also understand; I hope you will understand until the end — 14 as you have already understood us in part — that on the day of the Lord Jesus we are your boast even as you are our boast.

**Paul remembers the Corinthians as he travels to Macedonia**

15 Since I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a double favor; 16 I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on to Judea. 17 Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to ordinary human standards, ready to say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time? 18 As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been "Yes and No." 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not "Yes and No"; but in him it is always "Yes." 20 For in him every one of God's promises is a "Yes." For this reason it is through him that we say the "Amen," to the glory of God. 21 But it is God who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us, 22 by putting his seal on us and giving us his Spirit in our hearts as a first installment.

23 But I call on God as witness against me: it was to spare you that I did not come again to Corinth. 24 I do not mean to imply that we lord it over your faith; rather, we are workers with you for your joy, because you stand firm in the faith. [2 Corinthians 2] 1 So I made up my mind
not to make you another painful visit. 2 For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? 3 And I wrote as I did, so that when I came, I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice; for I am confident about all of you, that my joy would be the joy of all of you. 4 For I wrote you out of much distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain, but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

5 But if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but to some extent — not to exaggerate it — to all of you. 6 This punishment by the majority is enough for such a person; 7 so now instead you should forgive and console him, so that he may not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 So I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. 9 I wrote for this reason: to test you and to know whether you are obedient in everything. 10 Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. What I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ. 11 And we do this so that we may not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

12 When I came to Troas to proclaim the good news of Christ, a door was opened for me in the Lord; 13 but my mind could not rest because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said farewell to them and went on to Macedonia.

**Real character of Paul's ministry; the ministry of glory; God equips competent ministers**

14 But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him. 15 For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; 16 to the one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not peddlers of God's word like so many; but in Christ we speak as persons of sincerity, as persons sent from God and standing in his presence.
[2 Corinthians 3]

Ministers of the new covenant of Spirit

1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Surely we do not need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you, do we? 2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all; 3 and you show that you are a letter of Christ, prepared by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

4 Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God, 6 who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7 Now if the ministry of death, chiseled in letters on stone tablets, came in glory so that the people of Israel could not gaze at Moses' face because of the glory of his face, a glory now set aside, 8 how much more will the ministry of the Spirit come in glory? 9 For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, much more does the ministry of justification abound in glory! 10 Indeed, what once had glory has lost its glory because of the greater glory; 11 for if what was set aside came through glory, much more has the permanent come in glory!

12 Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, 13 not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. 14 But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. 15 Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; 16 but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.
[2 Corinthians 4]
Climax of Paul's self-defense

1 Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Ministry of hardship

7 But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. 11 For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.

13 But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture — "I believed, and so I spoke" — we also believe, and so we speak, 14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. 15 Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.
16 So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. 17 For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, 18 because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

[2 Corinthians 5]

1 For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling — 3 if indeed, when we have taken it off we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are still in this tent, we groan under our burden, because we wish not to be unclothed but to be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

6 So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord — 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9 So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. 10 For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

Ministry of reconciliation

11 Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. 13 For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all
have died. 15 And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[2 Corinthians 6]
Summary of defense

1 As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. 2 For he says,
   "At an acceptable time I have listened to you,
    and on a day of salvation I have helped you."
See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! 3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4 but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see — we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.
Final appeal to the Corinthians

11 We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. 12 There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. 13 In return — I speak as to children — open wide your hearts also.
14 Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness? 15 What agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

"I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
17 Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you,
18 and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

[2 Corinthians 7]

1 Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and of spirit, making holiness perfect in the fear of God.

2 Make room in your hearts for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. 3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 4 I often boast about you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with consolation; I am overjoyed in all our affliction.
Resumption of the travelogue

5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted in every way — disputes without and fears within. 6 But God, who consoles the downcast, consoled us by the arrival of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was consoled about you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. 8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it (though I did regret it, for I see that I grieved you with that letter, though only briefly). 9 Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance; for you felt a godly grief, so that you were not harmed in any way by us. 10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret, but worldly grief produces death. 11 For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves guiltless in the matter. 12 So although I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong, nor on account of the one who was wronged, but in order that your zeal for us might be made known to you before God. 13 In this we find comfort.

In addition to our own consolation, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his mind has been set at rest by all of you. 14 For if I have been somewhat boastful about you to him, I was not disgraced; but just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting to Titus has proved true as well. 15 And his heart goes out all the more to you, as he remembers the obedience of all of you, and how you welcomed him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you.

[2 Corinthians 8]
The collection for the Jerusalem church; letter of appeal to the Corinthians for the collection

1 We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; 2 for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme
poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. 3 For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, 4 begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints — 5 and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, 6 so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. 7 Now as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you — so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

8 I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. 10 And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something — 11 now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. 12 For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has — not according to what one does not have. 13 I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance between 14 your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. 15 As it is written,

"The one who had much did not have too much,
and the one who had little did not have too little."

16 But thanks be to God who put in the heart of Titus the same eagerness for you that I myself have. 17 For he not only accepted our appeal, but since he is more eager than ever, he is going to you of his own accord. 18 With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his proclaiming the good news; 19 and not only that, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us while we are administering this generous undertaking for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our goodwill. 20 We intend that no one should blame us about this generous gift that we are administering, 21 for we intend to do what is right not only in the
Lord's sight but also in the sight of others. 22 And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found eager in many matters, but who is now more eager than ever because of his great confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker in your service; as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. 24 Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

[2 Corinthians 9]
A second letter of appeal for the collection

1 Now it is not necessary for me to write you about the ministry to the saints, 2 for I know your eagerness, which is the subject of my boasting about you to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year; and your zeal has stirred up most of them. 3 But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you may not prove to have been empty in this case, so that you may be ready, as I said you would be; 4 otherwise, if some Macedonians come with me and find that you are not ready, we would be humiliated — to say nothing of you — in this undertaking. 5 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you, and arrange in advance for this bountiful gift that you have promised, so that it may be ready as a voluntary gift and not as an extortion.

6 The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. 9 As it is written,

"He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor;
his righteousness endures forever."

10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be enriched in every way for your great
generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; 12 for 
the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints 
but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. 13 Through the 
testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the 
confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing 
with them and with all others, 14 while they long for you and pray for 
you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. 15 
Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

[2 Corinthians 10]
Defense of apostolic authority; Paul attacks his opponents

1 I myself, Paul, appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ 
— I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you 
when I am away! — 2 I ask that when I am present I need not show 
boldness by daring to oppose those who think we are acting according 
to human standards. 3 Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not 
-wage war according to human standards; 4 for the weapons of our 
warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy 
strongholds. We destroy arguments 5 and every proud obstacle raised 
up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive 
to obey Christ. 6 We are ready to punish every disobedience when your 
obedience is complete.

7 Look at what is before your eyes. If you are confident that you 
belong to Christ, remind yourself of this, that just as you belong to 
Christ, so also do we. 8 Now, even if I boast a little too much of our 
authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing 
you down, I will not be ashamed of it. 9 I do not want to seem as 
though I am trying to frighten you with my letters. 10 For they say, "His 
letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his 
speech contemptible." 11 Let such people understand that what we say 
by letter when absent, we will also do when present.

12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those 
who commend themselves. But when they measure themselves by one 
another, and compare themselves with one another, they do not show 
good sense. 13 We, however, will not boast beyond limits, but will keep
within the field that God has assigned to us, to reach out even as far as you. 14 For we were not overstepping our limits when we reached you; we were the first to come all the way to you with the good news of Christ. 15 We do not boast beyond limits, that is, in the labors of others; but our hope is that, as your faith increases, our sphere of action among you may be greatly enlarged, 16 so that we may proclaim the good news in lands beyond you, without boasting of work already done in someone else's sphere of action. 17 "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." 18 For it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends.

[2 Corinthians 11]
A fool's speech; appeal to the Corinthians as a fool

1 I wish you would bear with me in a little foolishness. Do bear with me! 2 I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. 4 For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit to it readily enough. 5 I think that I am not in the least inferior to these super-apostles. 6 I may be untrained in speech, but not in knowledge; certainly in every way and in all things we have made this evident to you.

7 Did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I proclaimed God's good news to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. 9 And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for my needs were supplied by the friends who came from Macedonia. So I refrained and will continue to refrain from burdening you in any way. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boast of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. 11 And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!
12 And what I do I will also continue to do, in order to deny an opportunity to those who want an opportunity to be recognized as our equals in what they boast about. 13 For such boasters are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is not strange if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness. Their end will match their deeds.

Paul compares himself to the false apostles

16 I repeat, let no one think that I am a fool; but if you do, then accept me as a fool, so that I too may boast a little. 17 What I am saying in regard to this boastful confidence, I am saying not with the LORD's authority, but as a fool; 18 since many boast according to human standards, I will also boast. 19 For you gladly put up with fools, being wise yourselves! 20 For you put up with it when someone makes slaves of you, or preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or gives you a slap in the face. 21 To my shame, I must say, we were too weak for that!

But whatever anyone dares to boast of — I am speaking as a fool — I also dare to boast of that. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? I am talking like a madman — I am a better one: with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless floggings, and often near death. 24 Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; 26 on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; 27 in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. 28 And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I am not indignant?
30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus (blessed be he forever!) knows that I do not lie. 32 In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

[2 Corinthians 12]

1 It is necessary to boast; nothing is to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. 3 And I know that such a person — whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows — was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. 4 On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. 5 But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. 6 Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, 7 but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 8 Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Conclusion of the fool's speech

11 I have been a fool! You forced me to it. Indeed you should have been the ones commending me, for I am not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. 12 The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works. 13 How have you been worse off than the
other churches, except that I myself did not burden you? Forgive me this wrong!

Paul prepares for a third visit

14 Here I am, ready to come to you this third time. And I will not be a burden, because I do not want what is yours but you; for children ought not to lay up for their parents, but parents for their children. 15 I will most gladly spend and be spent for you. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? 16 Let it be assumed that I did not burden you. Nevertheless (you say) since I was crafty, I took you in by deceit. 17 Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves with the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

19 Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves before you? We are speaking in Christ before God. Everything we do, beloved, is for the sake of building you up. 20 For I fear that when I come, I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish; I fear that there may perhaps be quarreling, jealousy, anger, selfishness, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder. 21 I fear that when I come again, my God may humble me before you, and that I may have to mourn over many who previously sinned and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and licentiousness that they have practiced.

[2 Corinthians 13]

1 This is the third time I am coming to you. "Any charge must be sustained by the evidence of two or three witnesses." 2 I warned those who sinned previously and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again, I will not be lenient — 3 since you desire proof that Christ is speaking in me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful in you. 4 For he was crucified in weakness, but lives by the power of God. For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we will live with him by the power of God.
5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless, indeed, you fail to meet the test! 6 I hope you will find out that we have not failed. 7 But we pray to God that you may not do anything wrong — not that we may appear to have met the test, but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed. 8 For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. 9 For we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. This is what we pray for, that you may become perfect. 10 So I write these things while I am away from you, so that when I come, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.

Final benediction

11 Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.
Introduction

By the middle of the first century CE, although the early Christian movement was still connected to Judaism, an increasing number of its members were Gentiles. The tireless missionary activity of Paul, who saw himself as the apostle to the Gentiles (1.16), had fostered this development. The relationship between these new, non-Jewish converts and Jewish Christians, and between the emerging Christian movement and Judaism, became an issue of burning importance. One crucial issue concerned the status of the law of Moses. Should Gentile Christians convert to Judaism in the process of becoming Christians? Were they required to observe Jewish law, even in part? The Letter to the Galatians gives Paul's view of this controversy and states a position on the Jewish law that will have far-reaching consequences.

Paul does not, however, discuss the issue in the abstract. Instead, facing a concrete situation in a particular place, he argues passionately that his view is crucial both to the survival of his mission in Galatia and, more important, to that of Christianity generally. In his confrontation with Peter at Antioch, he had held that the demands of the Jewish law were an unnecessary burden for Gentiles when even Jewish Christians had ceased to observe them (2.11-14). Now he argues that the observance of the Jewish law by Gentiles is in itself incompatible with acceptance of the gospel (2.15-21). Paul does not directly address the question of whether Jewish Christians were still bound to keep the law. In his allegorical argument based upon the story of Hagar and Sarah (4.21-31) he seems to propose that the Sinai covenant and the community of Israel based upon the observance of the law is drastically at odds with the authentic Israel, the community united with the one true heir of Abraham, Jesus Christ (3.16). Previously Paul has talked about the law as a provisional measure, a means to discipline those who would inherit Abraham's promise during their religious infancy.
(3.24; cf. 4.1-6). The implication of these passages is that Judaism is redundant, perhaps even an obstacle to God's plan for human salvation. Paul does not draw this conclusion. Later, in Romans 9-11, he explicitly rebuts it. Paul accepts that Peter and James are "entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised" (2.7-8), and observance of the law was preserved at this time in Jewish Christian communities.

The exact date of the letter's composition is not known, but it was written presumably some time between the late forties and early fifties of the Common Era. Paul would develop his views on the law further in his Letter to the Romans, which is considered his last letter. Although Galatians follows the form of a letter to specific Christian churches, there are no references to anyone in the community and little information about Paul's mission among them. The letter is rather Paul's defense of his Gentile mission as a whole and the particular understanding of the law on which it is based. The addresses of the letter are an unspecified number of "the churches of Galatia" (1.2), a Roman province in central Asia Minor where, according to Acts, Paul had preached (Acts 13.14-14.23; cf. 16.6; 18.23).

Prior to writing Galatians, Paul had been involved in discussions of Gentile observance of the law with the leaders of the Jerusalem church (2.1-10). This meeting may be identical with the council at Jerusalem, reported in Acts 15.1-29. Paul's account of his visit to Jerusalem is, however, very different from the account in Acts. In Galatians Paul is insistent that no demand was made for Gentiles to observe the law. A conflict in Antioch ensued over table fellowship of Jews and Gentiles (2.11-14). Paul names as his opponents in Antioch "certain people... from James" and "the circumcision faction," but it is unclear whether the two groups are the same. Nonetheless, they persuaded the rest of the Jews, including Peter and Barnabas, to break off table fellowship with Gentiles. Paul repeats his accusation against Peter that Peter himself no longer observed Jewish law and customs, yet wanted to impose them on Gentiles.

The context of Paul's formulations was his better struggle with opponents in Galatia. The content and sharp polemic of Galatians were worked out in reply to what Paul knew of his opponents' teaching and
their attacks upon him. We would have a better understanding of Paul's intentions if we knew more about them. Despite the best efforts of scholars to identify and reconstruct the arguments of Paul's opponents, they remain a shadowy group. Most commentators describe them as Judaizers because they insisted on circumcision. Whether they belonged to the same opposition that Paul had faced in Antioch or during his visit to the Jerusalem leaders (the "false believers" in 2.4) cannot be decided from Paul's letter. We also have no evidence that they were missionaries sent by the Jerusalem church and representing James, notwithstanding Paul's earlier conflict in Antioch. Nevertheless, the effect of their controversy with Paul is unmistakable. The opposition forced him to develop a defense of his mission to the Gentiles which would provide the basis for a Christianity whose practices would be independent of its Jewish roots.

The letter falls naturally into three parts. In the first, after a salutation (1.1-5), Paul reviews his life (1.6-2.14): his missionary relationship to the Galatians (1.6-12); his past, including his own call (1.13-24); and his relationship with the Jerusalem church and the other apostles (2.1-14). The second section (2.15-5.1) is a complex and densely argued presentation of Paul's vision of the gospel: the opposition of faith and works of the law (2.15-21); the conversion of the Galatians (3.1-5); the promise to Abraham and his inheritance (3.6-18); the purpose of the law (3.19-25); baptism (3.26-29); the inheritance of the children of Christ (4.1-7); the danger of slipping back into bondage (4.8-11); the close relationship of Paul and the Galatians (4.12-20); and an allegorical argument based on the story of Hagar and Sarah (4.21-5.1). The third section (5.2-6.18) presents the practical application of Paul's view: reasons against the requirement of circumcision (5.2-12); true Christian liberty (5.13-26); moral exhortation (6.1-10); and a postscript (6.11-18).
[Galations 1]
The salutation, stressing Paul's apostolic authority

1 Paul an apostle — sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead — 2 and all the members of God's family who are with me,

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4 who gave himself for our sins to set us free from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5 to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

A recapitulation of Paul's life; Paul rebukes the Galatians

6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — 7 not that there is another gospel, but there are some who are confusing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so now I repeat, if anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed!

Paul states the defense of his gospel

10 Am I now seeking human approval, or God's approval? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still pleasing people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

11 For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; 12 for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.
Paul recounts his background in Judaism, his calling as an apostle, and his mission to the Gentiles; Paul's conversion, early life in the church, and defense of his apostleship.

13 You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. 14 I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. 15 But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased 16 to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, 17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus.

18 Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days; 19 but I did not see any other apostle except James the LORD's brother. 20 In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie! 21 Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia, 22 and I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea that are in Christ; 23 they only heard it said, "The one who formerly was persecuting us is now proclaiming the faith he once tried to destroy." 24 And they glorified God because of me.

[Galatians 2]
Paul meets with the Jerusalem leaders

1 Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. 2 I went up in response to a revelation. Then I laid before them (though only in a private meeting with the acknowledged leaders) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure that I was not running, or had not run, in vain. 3 But even Titus, who was with me, was not compelled to be circumcised, though he was a Greek. 4 But because of false believers secretly brought in, who slipped in to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, so that they might enslave us — 5 we did not submit to them even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might always remain with you. 6 And from those who were supposed to be
acknowledged leaders (what they actually were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality) — those leaders contributed nothing to me. 7 On the contrary, when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter had been entrusted with the gospel for the circumcised 8 (for he who worked through Peter making him an apostle to the circumcised also worked through me in sending me to the Gentiles), 9 and when James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do.

Paul's confrontation with Peter at Antioch

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; 12 for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. 13 And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

Paul's gospel: faith in Christ frees us from observance of Jewish law; Jews and Gentiles are both justified through Christ

15 We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; 16 yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law. 17 But if, in our effort to be justified in Christ, we ourselves have been found to be sinners, is Christ then a servant of sin? Certainly not! 18 But if I build up again the very things that I once tore down, then I demonstrate that I am a transgressor. 19 For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ;
20 and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.

[Galatians 3]
Paul's challenge to the Galatians

1 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified! 2 The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? 4 Did you experience so much for nothing? — if it really was for nothing. 5 Well then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

Abraham the model for Christian faith

6 Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," 7 so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. 8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you." 9 For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed.

10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law." 11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for "The one who is righteous will live by faith." 12 But the law does not rest on faith; on the contrary, "Whoever does the works of the law will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us — for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" — 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
The inheritance of Abraham

15 Brothers and sisters, I give an example from daily life: once a person's will has been ratified, no one adds to it or annuls it. 16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring; it does not say, "And to offsprings," as of many; but it says, "And to your offspring," that is, to one person, who is Christ. 17 My point is this: the law, which came four hundred thirty years later, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. 18 For if the inheritance comes from the law, it no longer comes from the promise; but God granted it to Abraham through the promise.

The purpose of the law of Moses

19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring would come to whom the promise had been made; and it was ordained through angels by a mediator. 20 Now a mediator involves more than one party; but God is one.

21 Is the law then opposed to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could make alive, then righteousness would indeed come through the law. 22 But the scripture has imprisoned all things under the power of sin, so that what was promised through faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

Baptism into Christ

23 Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, 26 for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. 27 As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.
1 My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of all the property; 2 but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. 3 So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world. 4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. 6 And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" 7 So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

The Galatians slip back into bondage

8 Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to beings that by nature are not gods. 9 Now, however, that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits? How can you want to be enslaved to them again? 10 You are observing special days, and months, and seasons, and years. 11 I am afraid that my work for you may have been wasted.

Paul reminds the Galatians of their close relationship to him

12 Friends, I beg you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong. 13 You know that it was because of a physical infirmity that I first announced the gospel to you; 14 though my condition put you to the test, you did not scorn or despise me, but welcomed me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. 15 What has become of the goodwill you felt? For I testify that, had it been possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? 17 They make much of you, but for no good purpose; they want to exclude you, so that you may make much of them. 18 It is good to be made much of for a good
purpose at all times, and not only when I am present with you. 19 My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 20 I wish I were present with you now and could change my tone, for I am perplexed about you.

The allegory of Hagar and Sarah

21 Tell me, you who desire to be subject to the law, will you not listen to the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave woman and the other by a free woman. 23 One, the child of the slave, was born according to the flesh; the other, the child of the free woman, was born through the promise. 24 Now this is an allegory: these women are two covenants. One woman, in fact, is Hagar, from Mount Sinai, bearing children for slavery. 25 Now Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the other woman corresponds to the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother. 27 For it is written, "Rejoice, you childless one, you who bear no children, burst into song and shout, you who endure no birth pangs; for the children of the desolate woman are more numerous than the children of the one who is married."

28 Now you, my friends, are children of the promise, like Isaac. 29 But just as at that time the child who was born according to the flesh persecuted the child who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also. 30 But what does the scripture say? "Drive out the slave and her child; for the child of the slave will not share the inheritance with the child of the free woman." 31 So then, friends, we are children, not of the slave but of the free woman. [Galatians 5] 1 For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Galatians 5
Practical applications and exhortations; Paul's case against circumcision

2 Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. 3 Once again I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire
You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything; the only thing that counts is faith working through love.

You were running well; who prevented you from obeying the truth? Such persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough. I am confident about you in the Lord that you will not think otherwise. But whoever it is that is confusing you will pay the penalty. But my friends, why am I still being persecuted if I am still preaching circumcision? In that case the offense of the cross has been removed. I wish those who unsettle you would castrate themselves!

The behavior of those called in freedom to live by the Spirit; Christian liberty

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not subject to the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
22 By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

[Galatians 6]
Paul offers the Galatians several maxims by which to judge their behavior

1 My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. 4 All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. 5 For all must carry their own loads.

6 Those who are taught the word must share in all good things with their teacher.

7 Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. 8 If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. 9 So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. 10 So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

Postscript

11 See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand! 12 It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised — only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast
about your flesh. 14 May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! 16 As for those who will follow this rule — peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body.

18 May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.
Introduction

In powerful poetic language drawn from early Christian hymns and the Jewish scriptures, the Letter to the Ephesians celebrates the author's vision of the church. According to God's eternal plan for humanity, Christ's death brought together both Jews and Gentiles into a new, unified community: The Jewish law, which previously distinguished and divided Jew from Gentile, was rendered irrelevant by the cross, and Christ thus reconciled both groups to each other and to God (2.14-16). According to Ephesians, human existence is beset by the malevolent influence of demonic beings. Christ has been given power over them, and through God's grace human beings may be freed from their immoral and deceitful influences. The new life of believers is one of knowledge and spiritual power, and thus there is the recurring contrast of the old life with the new (2.1-6, 11-13, 19; 4.22-24; 5.8). Another prominent theme is Paul's role as revealer of God's previously hidden plan (3.1-12). The church must recognize both Christ as its Lord and exemplar (4.12-16, 20-24; 5.1-2) and its own exalted status as a spirit-filled community that brings the power and presence of God to the world (1.22-23; 2.22; 3.10, 19; 4.24). Conflict with demonic forces continues (6.10-20), but the church looks forward to the complete reestablishment of God's sovereignty over the creation (1.10) and the perfection of the church as the body of Christ (4.12-16).

Ephesians begins with a salutation (1.1-2) and an introductory thanksgiving prayer (1.15-23) and ends with an epilogue (6.21-24), but it lacks many typical features of Paul's letters and is better classified as a homily. The text divides into two sections: theological teaching (chs 1-3) and ethical exhortation (chs 4-6). The first half focuses on the church as a new community in which Jews and Gentiles equally share in God's blessings. Tension between Jewish and Gentile believers persisted through the first century, and it is unclear whether Ephesians is
intended to encourage Gentiles to recognize their position as full partners more highly. The second half is an appeal for the church to maintain that new unity and press on toward complete maturity by rejecting former lifestyles and displaying Christian values of truth, love, forgiveness, and sexual purity. Rather than advocating a complete renewal of family relationships based on love, forgiveness, and mutual submission, however, the author's christology is used to justify the structure and duties of the ancient patriarchal family (5.22-6.9).

Some early manuscripts and early Christian writers make no reference to Ephesus in 1.1 (instead reading, "To the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus"), and Ephesians does not address problems specific to a single congregation. Some scholars conclude that Ephesians was originally a circular letter, distributed to a number of churches, perhaps in Asia Minor. Others, noting the text's similarities to Colossians, believe the original audience was the churches of Hierapolis and Laodicea (see Col 4.13, 16). The significant contrasts between Ephesians and the letters we can confidently ascribe to Paul raise questions about the identity of the author of Ephesians. Many important terms in Ephesians are not used by Paul elsewhere (e.g., heavenly places, dividing wall, fellow citizen), and some of Paul's characteristic terms and emphases either are given new meaning (e.g., mystery, church) or are completely absent (e.g., the Jews, justify). In addition, the verbose style of Ephesians, especially the use of complex, long sentences (many of which have been divided in the NRSV), is not characteristic of Paul. Theological differences, especially Ephesians' emphasis on believers' present salvation (1.3-12; 2.4-10) and the use of household rules (5.22-6.9), are also evident (see the Introduction to Colossians). As a result of the combine weight of these differences, many scholars hold that Ephesians was written in the late first century by a Jewish-Christian admirer of Paul who sought to apply Pauline thought to the situation of the church in his own day. A minority of scholars hold the author to be Paul, who was writing at the end of his career while imprisoned, probably in Rome; different theological emphases are attributed to developments in Paul's thinking and the particular situation addressed. There are, nevertheless, many verbal parallels between Ephesians and the Pauline letters, especially Colossians. If Paul was the author of both Ephesians and Colossians, they were probably written at the same time;
if Ephesians was written by a later follower of Paul, he drew upon Colossians' established authority and modeled his work on it.

[Ephesians 1]

Salutation

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessing of God for his blessings

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,
4 just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. 5 He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace 8 that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight 9 he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, 12 so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; 14 this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.
Thanksgiving prayer for wisdom and power

15 I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason 16 I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. 17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, 18 so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. 20 God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. 22 And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

[Ephesians 2]
The old life contrasted with the new life

1 You were dead through the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. 3 All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us 5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ — by grace you have been saved — 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God — 9 not the result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.
The unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church

11 So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called "the uncircumcision" by those who are called "the circumcision" — a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands — remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 12 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 13 For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. 15 He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, 16 and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. 17 So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; 18 for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. 21 In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

[Ephesians 3]
Paul reveals God's plan

1 This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles — 2 for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you, 3 and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, 4 a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. 5 In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: 6 that is, the Gentiles have become fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.
7 Of this gospel I have become a servant according to the gift of God's grace that was given me by the working of his power. 8 Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, 9 and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; 10 so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. 11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him. 13 I pray therefore that you may not lose heart over my sufferings for you; they are your glory.

**Prayer for the church's maturity**

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. 16 I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, 17 and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. 18 I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

**[Ephesians 4]**

**Ethical implications; appeal for unity amid diversity**

1 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one
hope of your calling, 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

7 But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it is said,

"When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive;
he gave gifts to his people."

9 (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) 11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. 14 We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. 15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

Appeal for a changed lifestyle

17 Now this I affirm and insist on in the Lord: you must no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart. 19 They have lost all sensitivity and have abandoned themselves to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 That is not the way you learned Christ! 21 For surely you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. 22 You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.
25 So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our
neighbors, for we are members of one another. 26 Be angry but do not
sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not make
room for the devil. 28 Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them
labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have
something to share with the needy. 29 Let no evil talk come out of
your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need,
so that your words may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not
grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal
for the day of redemption. 31 Put away from you all bitterness and
wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice,
32 and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
as God in Christ has forgiven you. [Ephesians 5] 1 Therefore be
imitators of God, as beloved children, 2 and live in love, as Christ loved
us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

[Ephesians 5]

3 But fornication and impurity of any kind, or greed, must not even be
mentioned among you, as is proper among saints. 4 Entirely out of
place is obscene, silly, and vulgar talk; but instead, let there be
thanksgiving. 5 Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure person, or
one who is greedy (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the
kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these
things the wrath of God comes on those who are disobedient. 7
Therefore do not be associated with them. 8 For once you were
darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light —
9 for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and
ture. 10 Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Take no part in
the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. 12 For it is
shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; 13 but
everything exposed by the light becomes visible, 14 for everything that
becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

"Sleeper, awake!
Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."
15 Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. 16 So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 17 Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, 18 as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, 20 giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

21 Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Rules for household relationships

22 Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. 24 Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, 27 so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind — yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. 33 Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband.

[Ephesians 6]

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother" — this is the first commandment with a promise: 3 "so that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."
4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as you obey Christ; 6 not only while being watched, and in order to please them, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7 Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, 8 knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord, whether we are slaves or free.

9 And, masters, do the same to them. Stop threatening them, for you know that both of you have the same Master in heaven, and with him there is no partiality.

**Appeal for strength in spiritual battle**

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. 15 As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. 16 With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.
Epilogue

21 So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus will tell you everything. He is a dear brother and a faithful minister in the Lord. 22 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, to let you know how we are, and to encourage your hearts.

23 Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.
Introduction

Philippi was a major city of Macedonia and a Roman colony on the Via Egnatia, the Roman road linking Byzantium in the East to the western coast of Macedonia, from which ships could easily reach Italy. The Christian community in Philippi was the westernmost Pauline church at the time of its founding (Acts 16.11-13). The mutual affection between Paul and the Philippians is evident in the letter and stands in contrast to the problems he had with some other churches.

Paul writes from prison and is uncertain of the outcome for himself (1.12-26). The themes of opposition and the possibility of death are therefore prominent. Yet in the midst of suffering and uncertainty, the theme of joy emerges quite clearly and remarkably (1.4, 18, 25; 2.2, 17-18, 28; 4.4, 10). The Philippians too are experiencing some kind of opposition (1.29), but Paul’s major concern is to bring them together and thus to overcome the threat of internal disharmony. In keeping with that purpose, he uses the powerful hymnic passage that celebrates the self-emptying of Christ even to death, for which God bestowed on him the name of "Lord," the "name above all names" (2.6-11). The hymn was probably composed by a prior author and known both to Paul and the Philippians, perhaps as part of a baptismal liturgy. Here it is the prime example of why they should be willing also to empty themselves of their own opinions. The example of Paul himself follows and supports the argument (3.4-16). Paul offers both Christ and himself as examples of courage and self-surrender in the face of suffering and death. Thus he attempts to turn the Philippians from partisan interest to unity.

Except that Paul was in prison and awaiting trial at the time of writing (1.2-26), it is impossible to speak confidently of the time and place of the writing of this letter. Because of references to the imperial guard
or praetorium (1.13) and to the emperor's household (4.22), and also because the situation reflected in the letter bears some resemblance to that described at the very end of the book of Acts, the traditional setting has been during the period of Paul's imprisonment at Rome (about 61-63 CE). The indications are by no means conclusive, however, and more recently it has been thought that the place of composition is perhaps Caesarea before Paul's arrival in Rome (Acts 24-26) or Ephesus at an earlier stage in Paul's career, especially because of the several goings and comings between Paul and Philippi implied in the letter (2.19, 25-26; 4.10, 18) put against the great distance from Philippi to Rome. The terms referring to the emperor's establishment were used also for provincial government centers and the imperial civil service outside Rome.

The immediate occasion of Paul's writing was the return to Philippi of Epaphroditus (2.25-30), who had been sent by the Philippian church with gifts for Paul (4.18), and who had been seriously ill while staying with him. Paul took this opportunity to thank them for their gifts, and to set their difficulties in a wider framework by describing his and their situation in light of the reality of Christ.

The letter follows the usual pattern of Paul's letters, but some seemingly abrupt changes of topic (especially between 3.1 and 2, and 4.3 and 4), in addition to the fact that an early Christian writer (Polycarp, Philippians 2.3), speaks of "letters" of Paul to the Philippians, has led some scholars to conclude that our present Philippians is composed of as many as three letters that Paul wrote to Philippi. Many others, however, find that Philippians is a coherent whole as it stands. After the greeting (1.1-2) and thanksgiving (1.3-11), Paul lays out the situation (1.12-26) and exhorts the community to unity (1.27-4.3) with many arguments, including proposing Christ (2.5-11), Timothy and Epaphroditus (2.19-30), and himself (3.4-14) as models of self-giving for the good of the whole. He thanks them for their recent gift (4.10-20) and concludes the letter (4.21-23).
[Philippians 1]
Salutation

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,
To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

3 I thank my God every time I remember you,  
4 constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you,  
5 because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.  
6 I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.  
7 It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.  
8 For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus.  
9 And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight  
10 to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless,  
11 having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Paul's situation in chains

12 I want you to know, beloved, that what has happened to me has actually helped to spread the gospel,  
13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to everyone else that my imprisonment is for Christ;  
14 and most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, dare to speak the word with greater boldness and without fear.
15 Some proclaim Christ from envy and rivalry, but others from goodwill. 16 These proclaim Christ out of love, knowing that I have been put here for the defense of the gospel; 17 the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but intending to increase my suffering in my imprisonment. 18 What does it matter? Just this, that Christ is proclaimed in every way, whether out of false motives or true; and in that I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19 for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance. 20 It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. 22 If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which I prefer. 23 I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better; 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. 25 Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, 26 so that I may share abundantly in your boasting in Christ Jesus when I come to you again.

Appeal to unity, to be followed by examples

27 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, 28 and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. 29 For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well — 30 since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.
[Philippians 2]
First example: self-emptying of Christ

1 If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, 2 make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. 5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

6 who, though he was in the form of God,  
   did not regard equality with God  
   as something to be exploited,

7 but emptied himself,  
   taking the form of a slave,  
   being born in human likeness.  
   And being found in human form,

8 he humbled himself  
   and became obedient to the point of death —  
   even death on a cross.

9 Therefore God also highly exalted him  
   and gave him the name  
   that is above every name,

10 so that at the name of Jesus  
   every knee should bend,  
   in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  

11 and every tongue should confess  
   that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
   to the glory of God the Father.

12 Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
14 Do all things without murmuring and arguing, 15 so that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine like stars in the world. 16 It is by your holding fast to the word of life that I can boast on the day of Christ that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. 17 But even if I am being poured out as a libation over the sacrifice and the offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you — 18 and in the same way you also must be glad and rejoice with me.

Second example: Timothy and Epaphroditus

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. 20 I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. 21 All of them are seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But Timothy's worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope therefore to send him as soon as I see how things go with me; 24 and I trust in the Lord that I will also come soon.

25 Still, I think it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus — my brother and co-worker and fellow soldier, your messenger and minister to my need; 26 for he has been longing for all of you, and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. 27 He was indeed so ill that he nearly died. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, so that I would not have one sorrow after another. 28 I am the more eager to send him, therefore, in order that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. 29 Welcome him then in the Lord with all joy, and honor such people, 30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for those services that you could not give me.

[Philippians 3]

1 Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord.
A digression

To write the same things to you is not troublesome to me, and for you it is a safeguard.

2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh! 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh — 4 even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh.

Third example: Paul himself

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

7 Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. 8 More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. 10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, 11 if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. 13 Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let those of us then who are mature be of the same mind; and if you think differently about
anything, this too God will reveal to you. 16 Only let us hold fast to what we have attained.

17 Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. 18 For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. 19 Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. [Philippians 4] 1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

[Philippians 4]
Heart of the problem

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. 5 Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. 6 Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.
Acknowledgment of their gifts

10 I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. 11 Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. 12 I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me. 14 In any case, it was kind of you to share my distress.

15 You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. 16 For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that accumulates to your account. 18 I have been paid in full and have more than enough; I am fully satisfied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. 19 And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. 20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Conclusion

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The friends who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, especially those of the emperor's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.
COLOSSIANS

Introduction

The church in Colossae, a town on the Lycus river in the Roman province of Asia, was founded by a Colossian associate of Paul's named Epaphras (1.7-8; 4.12-13). The letter begins with a highly complimentary description of the Colossians' lives, but unnamed teachers, who observe Jewish rituals and pursue mystical experiences through ascetic practices (2.8-23), pose a threat to their faith. Unfortunately we possess no independent description of these teachings, and the polemical tone of this letter (for instance, "empty deceit, according to human tradition," 2.8) makes their precise identification difficult. The practices advocated are best understood as a form of Jewish apocalyptic mysticism, although others have preferred to see a synthesis of Judaism with proto-Gnostic thought, local Phrygian religious practices, or Hellenistic philosophy. The fact that these Jewish practices, which did not focus on Christ, were attractive to Christians reflects the continuing close connection of the synagogue and the church, as well as a typical first-century Christian ambivalence toward Judaism: A Jewish eschatological outlook and morality are central to the author's Christian vision, although many Jewish practices are simultaneously rejected as incompatible with Christ.

Colossians follows the basic structure of a Pauline letter, beginning with a salutation (1.1-2) and an introductory thanksgiving (1.3-8) and prayer (1.9-14), and ending with greetings and instructions (4.7-18). The body of the letter includes both a theological argument (2.6-23) and ethical instructions (3.1-4.6). The basis of the theological argument is laid in 1.12-2.5. In the elevated words of an early Christian hymn, Christ is praised as the supreme power over the cosmos and the church (1.15-20). Although demonic forces enslaved humanity in the past, Christians were freed from their influence, forgiven through Christ's death, and made full citizens of the kingdom of Christ, to whom they now owe
complete allegiance and obedience (1.12-14, 21-23). Also emphasized is Christ's identity as the perfect revelation of God (1.19; 2.9-10) and as the singular source of wisdom about how to live rightly (1.19; 2.9-10). The main theological argument focuses on the significance of the cross and the change in believers' destiny achieved by it (2.9-15); the recurring contrasts of death and life (2.12-13, 20; 3.1-5), old and new (3.9-10), and past and present (1.12-14, 21-23) emphasize the fundamental psychological and moral reorientation demanded of the believer. Because Jewish rituals and mystical experiences of angelic worship do not foster allegiance to Christ and belong to the old order, they must be rejected as distractions from Christ's lordship and as threats to the church. The members of a true Christian community, rejecting their previous immoral lifestyle (3.5-11) and reorienting their entire lives around Christ as Lord (3.1-4), are to live in harmony with each other as they worship and give thanks to God and Christ (3.12-17). The Christian household, however, is only a mildly Christianized version of an ancient patriarchal family (3.18-4.1) rather than a complete renewal of family relationships based on the equality of all in the new community.

There are many similarities to the undisputed letters of Paul in the structure, theology, and even language of Colossians. However, Colossians lacks certain central Pauline terms, utilizes new theological vocabulary, and is written in a significantly different, liturgical style. Two theological contrasts stand out: first, the vision of believers' present lives as nearly completely transformed by Christ's death and resurrection, instead of Paul's usual tension between the only partly fulfilled present and future resurrection and full enjoyment of Christ's benefits; second, the use of household rules, which is more characteristic of other post-Pauline literature (e.g., Ephesians and the Pastoral letters of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) than of Paul's own ethical instructions. The combined force of these differences has led some to conclude that Colossians was written in Paul's name by one of his disciples — either during Paul's own lifetime or a decade or two after his death — in order to lend authority to this application of Paul's thought to a new situation. Others, noting Colossians' close similarities to Philemon, think the letter was written by Paul himself while imprisoned (4.3, 10, 18) at Rome near the end of his life, and attribute the contrasts to developments in Paul's thinking and the particular
situation addressed in the letter. Colossians also has significant similarities to Ephesians and was probably used as a model by the author of that letter (see the Introduction to Ephesians).

[Colossians 1]

Salutation

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Thanksgiving for Colossians' obedience

3 In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 4 for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. 7 This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

Prayer for Colossians' growth

9 For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. 11 May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his
glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The supremacy of Christ

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers — all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Assurance and warning

21 And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him — provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

Paul's mission and pastoral commitment

24 I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. 25 I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, 26 the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. 27 To them
God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me.

[Colossians 2]

1 For I want you to know how much I am struggling for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face. 2 I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I am saying this so that no one may deceive you with plausible arguments. 5 For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I rejoice to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

Instruction in Christ and the cross

6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. 11 In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; 12 when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, 14 erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the
rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

**Warnings against destructive religious practices**

16 Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. 17 These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, 19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.

20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, 21 "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch"? 22 All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings. 23 These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.

**[Colossians 3]**

**Ethical implications; maintain a healthy perspective**

1 So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, 3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

**Reject sins of previous life**

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. 7 These are the ways you also once followed, when you
were living that life. 8 But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices 10 and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. 11 In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

**Adopt virtues of new life**

12 As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. 13 Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

**Rules for household relationships**

18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is your acceptable duty in the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, or they may lose heart. 22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, 24 since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality. **[Colossians 4]** 1 Masters, treat
your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

[Colossians 4]
Final admonitions

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, 4 so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should.

5 Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.

Final greetings and instructions

7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me; he is a beloved brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord. 8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts; 9 he is coming with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

10 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, as does Mark the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions — if he comes to you, welcome him. 11 And Jesus who is called Justus greets you. These are the only ones of the circumcision among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills. 13 For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. 16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea. 17 And say to
Archippus, "See that you complete the task that you have received in the Lord."

18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.
Introduction

First Thessalonians is a friendly, exhortative letter of encouragement. Paul extends affectionate praise for the audience's steadfast hope (1.3) and consistent behavior (4.1, 9). A stirring recounting of his separation from the community (2.17-3.7) reveals the community's affection for him. Allusions to family life such as "father" (1.1, 3; 2.11; 3.11, 13), "sons" (1.10; 5.5), and "brothers" (14 instances) also convey a friendly tone.

Yet, the numerous imperatives in chs 4 and 5 convey an exhortative tone as well. This tone also pervades the earlier chapters, for (as with other ancient letters of exhortation) the letter highlights the imitation of models (1.6; 2.14) and the remembrance of a teacher's previous words or deed (2.1-12; 3.4). With the friendly and exhortative tones, moreover, the letter encourages a community that is facing social pressures and perhaps outright persecution to maintain its apocalyptic vigilance.

Thessalonica, the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia, was strategically located on both sea and land routes. First Thessalonians, addressed to the congregation there, is Paul's earliest letter. After being mistreated at Philippi (2.2; Acts 16.19-40), Paul went to Thessalonica where he established this congregation. After a painful separation (2.17) and the failure of repeated efforts to return (2.18), Paul dispatched Timothy to Thessalonica from Athens (3.1) while he later moved on to Corinth (Acts 18.1-17). From there, perhaps around 50 CE, he wrote this letter.

Commencing with a typical though simple Pauline opening (1.1) and ending with a typical Pauline closing (5.23-28), the letter offers repeated encouragement toward steadfastness. A thanksgiving acknowledges the congregation's growth, the gospel's power, and
Paul's persistence in prayer (1.2-5). Next, Paul recalls the community's consistency in the reception, proclamation, and early work of the gospel despite ongoing opposition (1.6-2.16). Although 2.14-16 seems anti-Jewish and thus not characteristic of Paul, there is no evidence for a later addition here. Readers should remember that the polemics are directed toward Jewish persecutors of the Judean churches, not all Jews. Such polemics, moreover, resonate with other "intra-Jewish" debates of Paul's day (see, for instance, Josephus Antiquities, 1.15.91; Philo Cherubim, 17). Then, when he recounts the deep anguish of separation (2.17-3.13), Paul notes Timothy's mediation of comfort and his own prayer for a reunion with the congregation. A description of the sanctified life follows along with commendations toward apocalyptic vigilance despite the deaths of loved ones and the temptations of false forms of security (4.1-5.22).

[1 Thessalonians 1]
Salutation

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:
Grace to you and peace.

Thanksgiving; the gospel's effectiveness

2 We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly 3 remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4 For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. 6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the
believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. 9 For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead — Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

[1 Thessalonians 2]

1 You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, 2 but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. 3 For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. 5 As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; 6 nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, 7 though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. 8 So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

9 You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers. 11 As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, 12 urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.
13 We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers. 14 For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you suffered the same things from your own compatriots as they did from the Jews, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out; they displease God and oppose everyone 16 by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. Thus they have constantly been filling up the measure of their sins; but God's wrath has overtaken them at last.

Separation and reunion

17 As for us, brothers and sisters, when, for a short time, we were made orphans by being separated from you — in person, not in heart — we longed with great eagerness to see you face to face. 18 For we wanted to come to you — certainly I, Paul, wanted to again and again — but Satan blocked our way. 19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? 20 Yes, you are our glory and joy!

[1 Thessalonians 3]

1 Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we decided to be left alone in Athens; 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and co-worker for God in proclaiming the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you for the sake of your faith, 3 so that no one would be shaken by these persecutions. Indeed, you yourselves know that this is what we are destined for. 4 In fact, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we were to suffer persecution; so it turned out, as you know. 5 For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labor had been in vain.

6 But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love. He has told us also that you always remember us kindly and long to see us — just as we long to see
you. 7 For this reason, brothers and sisters, during all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your faith. 8 For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord. 9 How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? 10 Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

11 Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. 12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. 13 And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

[1 Thessalonians 4]
Exhortation to maintain apocalyptic vigilance

1 Finally, brothers and sisters, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus that, as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God (as, in fact, you are doing), you should do so more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; 4 that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, 5 not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one wrong or exploit a brother or sister in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, just as we have already told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. 7 For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness. 8 Therefore whoever rejects this rejects not human authority but God, who also gives his Holy Spirit to you.

9 Now concerning love of the brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anyone write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another; 10 and indeed you do love all the brothers and sisters throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, beloved, to do so more and more, 11 to aspire to live quietly, to mind your own affairs,
and to work with your hands, as we directed you, so that you may behave properly toward outsiders and be dependent on no one.

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. 14 For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. 15 For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. 16 For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

[1 Thessalonians 5]

1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 When they say, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! 4 But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; 5 for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. 6 So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; 7 for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.
12 But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; 13 esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 14 And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. 15 See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. 16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise the words of prophets, 21 but test everything; hold fast to what is good; 22 abstain from every form of evil.

Epistolary closing

23 May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

25 Beloved, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss. 27 I solemnly command you by the Lord that this letter be read to all of them.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
**2 Thessalonians**

**Introduction**

Like 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians is an exhortative letter of encouragement. As with other ancient letters of exhortation, this one accentuates imitation (3.7a, 9) and remembrance of a teacher's words and deeds (2.5; 3.7b-10). Also, imperatives recur in chs 2 and 3, especially in the latter's disciplinary notices (3.6-15). Although the letter lacks the personal tone of 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians also encourages a community beset with opposition. Several forms of encouragement are evident: reports of the congregation's progress (1.3-4; 2.13); intercessory prayers (1.11-12; 2.16-17; 3.5, 16); and apocalyptic narratives about the opposition's termination (1.5-10; 2.3-12).

The curiosity of several verbal and structural similarities between 1 and 2 Thessalonians — for example, simple letter openings (1 Thess 1.1; 2 Thess 1.2), repeated words of thanks (1 Thess 1.2; 2.13; 3.9; 2 Thess 1.3, 2.13), and repeated intercessory prayers (1 Thess 3.11; 2 Thess 2.16) — lead scholars to different conclusions about the authorship of 2 Thessalonians. One deduction from the similarities is that Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians shortly after writing 1 Thessalonians, in the early 50s. Another deduction, however, is that 2 Thessalonians is a conscious imitation of 1 Thessalonians written much later by someone else. Uncertainty remains, but a key argument against Paul's authorship is the letter's assumption of forgeries (or non-genuine letters, 2.1-2). Forgeries did not like circulate while an author was alive (for their authorship could easily be disproved). As well, the letter's insistence that it contains a distinctive "mark" found in "every letter" (3.17) from Paul presupposes a time (probably in the late first century) when a body of Paul's letters had been collected.
First Thessalonians assumes, moreover, that Christ's appearance will be a surprise; we cannot know the time (1 Thess 5.1-11). In the opposite direction, 2 Thessalonians infers that at least we can know that the day of the Lord will not come at once; a dire struggle with evil must take place first, and even this is to be delayed for some time. The specifics of this apocalyptic story — the "rebellion" and the "lawless one" (2.3-4, 8), and "the mystery of lawlessness" (2.7), as well as "what is now restraining [the lawless one]" (2.6) and "the one who restrains it" (2.7), — are references that may have been clear to the letter's recipients (2.6), but are not clear to us. The letter's emphasis on a delayed struggle prepared the church for a period of continued life in this world.

A typical, though simple, epistolary opening (1.1-2) begins the letter, and a typical epistolary ending (3.16-18) closes it. The rest offers encouragement through prayer forms, apocalyptic narratives, and exhortations (1.3-3.15). An initial thanksgiving prayer with praise for the congregation's steadfastness despite affliction (1.3-4) closes with an apocalyptic narrative that promises relief for beleaguered believers and reprisal for the opposition (1.5-10). Then, a brief intercessory prayer (1.11-12) acknowledges God's power in bringing the congregation's election to fruition. Two sets of exhortations follow: one (2.1-17) to refute apocalyptic enthusiasm and suggest instead an indefinite interim before the cataclysmic end of time; and a second (3.1-15) to steer the congregation toward practical pursuits during the interim. Both sets of admonitions, moreover, include prayer forms: a thanksgiving (2.13-14) to remind the congregation of its election and need for sanctification; a prayer request (3.1, 2) for deliverance from evil persons; and an intercessory prayer (3.3) for God's aid in securing the congregation's steadfastness.
Salutation

1 Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A thanksgiving prayer with apocalyptic expectations

3 We must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of everyone of you for one another is increasing. 4 Therefore we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your steadfastness and faith during all your persecutions and the afflictions that you are enduring.

God's election

5 This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, and is intended to make you worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering. 6 For it is indeed just of God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to the afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 These will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, 10 when he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at on that day among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. 11 To this end we always pray for you, asking that our God will make you worthy of his call and will fulfill by his power every good resolve and work of faith, 12 so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.
[2 Thessalonians 2]
Correction of apocalyptic enthusiasm

1 As to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we beg you, brothers and sisters, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as though from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. 4 He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. 5 Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you? 6 And you know what is now restraining him, so that he may be revealed when his time comes. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who now restrains it is removed. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is apparent in the working of Satan, who uses all power, signs, lying wonders, 10 and every kind of wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false, 12 so that all who have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned.

13 But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 For this purpose he called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter.
16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word.

[2 Thessalonians 3]
Correction for dissident behavior

1 Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us, so that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere, just as it is among you, and that we may be rescued from wicked and evil people; for not all have faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will go on doing the things that we command. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

6 Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. 9 This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat. 11 For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. 12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living. 13 Brothers and sisters, do not be weary in doing what is right.

14 Take note of those who do not obey what we say in this letter; have nothing to do with them, so that they may be ashamed. 15 Do not regard them as enemies, but warn them as believers.
Epistolary closing

16 Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in all ways. The Lord be with all of you.

17 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the mark in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you.
INTRODUCTION TO THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

The term "Pastoral epistles" has been applied, since the eighteenth century, to the three letters from Paul to his two coworkers and envoys, Timothy and Titus. The name reflects the central concern in these three epistles for the internal life, governance, and behavior of Christian churches, as well as the individuals who comprise them. Scholars have long debated whether these letters were written by the apostle Paul himself, or by a loyal disciple who sought to provide Pauline answers for new times and places. While most scholars today regard them as pseudepigraphical (that is, ascribed to the authority of a major figure, but not actually written by him, a custom well attested both in ancient Jewish literature and in Greco-Roman philosophical and other texts), there is not complete unanimity on the question. The conclusion that these three epistles were not written by Paul is based upon literary, historical, and theological criteria. First and Second Timothy and Titus share a common Greek vocabulary and style which diverges in many ways from the rest of the Pauline epistles. Historically, the Pastoral epistles presume a situation marked by increasing institutionalization of the church and by heretical opposition, which perhaps better fits a period well after the death of Paul, at the beginning of the second century CE. And theologically these letters minimize or lack characteristic Pauline themes (such as justification by faith, or the church as the body of Christ) in favor of a new emphasis on adherence to tradition and regulation as signs of the Christian piety they seek to inculcate in their readers.

Recent challenges to the pseudepigraphical nature of all three letters have come from those who argue that each should be judged separately, that the letters contain fragments of original Pauline material, or that the very concept of "authorship" of a Pauline letter requires nuance, given that Paul used secretaries and served as a
member of a cooperative missionary team. Neither is there scholarly unanimity about which other letters are certainly authentic, nor which parts of those are most tellingly "Pauline" for comparison with these epistles. Each reader should consider the evidence about the authorship of the Pastorals cumulatively, first as a question of historical fact — did Paul write them or not? Then, and separately, one should reflect on the hermeneutical and theological implications of such a decision, for the denial of Pauline authorship may or may not entail a loss of authoritative status for that document within a particular religious community.

Regardless of authorship, the Pastoral epistles share the same rhetorical strategy: Each is addressed to a single individual among Paul's coworkers, but also has in mind a wider circle of readers. In each the author presents himself as a Paul who speaks as an unambiguously authoritative figure of the past to church leaders and members of later generations who have not known him personally.
Introduction

This letter from Paul to his "loyal child" Timothy (1.2) presents Paul as a wise and sure teacher who hands on to his student his deposit of tradition, his "sound teaching," so that his legacy will be handed down with fidelity to the next generation. The text presents a vision of household ethics that brings together instructions on Christian "godliness" (or "piety") for the individual, with a church order of regulations and qualifications for various roles in the church, designated "the household of God" (3.15). This advice is set in a dual context formed by the positively remembered relationship between Paul and Timothy, and, negatively, by the frequent allusions to purveyors of alternate teachings in or near Timothy's church in Ephesus. (For further information on Timothy, see the Introduction to 2 Timothy.)

The structure of this epistle is somewhat discursive, alternating sections containing contrast between true and false teaching with instruction for church order and governance. At times Timothy is directly addressed, but more often he recedes into the background, and the author speaks to a more universal audience. As ethical instruction (parenesis), 1 Timothy is cast in characteristic forms of Greco-Roman moral exhortation: letters between friends about progress in the ethical life, lists of virtues and vices, and contrasts between illustrious examples and notorious counterexamples. Likewise, the content is in many ways similar to contemporaneous moralizing literature: the emphasis on decorum and decency, on the hierarchical, orderly disposition of the patriarchal household, on reliable speech, and against accumulation of wealth. But the letter's theological universe, which is punctuated by shorthand terminology and quotations from established, is distinctly Christian.
Although the author names two of his Christian opponents (1.20), exactly what they taught, and why, is only hazily sketched here, in vituperative terms (they have "deviated" from the truth [1.6]; they have "suffered shipwreck" [1.19]). Though no complete historical reconstruction is possible from these verbal assaults, it seems that these opponents have some connection with the fellow Christians whom this author opposes with those who told and treasured the traditions found in the later apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thecla, which valorizes and authorizes women's ministries which, in their asceticism and renunciation of marriage, also claimed Paul as their champion.

The structure of 1 Timothy weaves between contrasting threads that are picked up, dropped, and then picked up again. After an epistolary prescript (1.1-2) the author launches (without the customary thanksgiving) into the body of the letter, which is roughly arranged with alternating sections of contrast between true and false teachers (1.3-2.15; 4.1-5.2; 6.2b-21a) and instructions for church order and governance, understood as the means for living in the church of God (3.1-16; 5.3-6.2a). The letter concludes with summary exhortations to Timothy to guard this tradition with which he has been entrusted (6.11-21). As with all Pauline letters a final benediction (6.21) seals the letter, perhaps in preparation for liturgical appropriation.

[1 Timothy 1]
Epistolary prescript: sender, addresses, and salutation

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

2 To Timothy, my loyal child in the faith:
   Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.
The contrast of true and false teaching (part one); opening warning against false teachers

3 I urge you, as I did when I was on my way to Macedonia, to remain in Ephesus so that you may instruct certain people not to teach any different doctrine, 4 and not to occupy themselves with myths and endless genealogies that promote speculations rather than the divine training that is known by faith. 5 But the aim of such instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and sincere faith. 6 Some people have deviated from these and turned to meaningless talk, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make assertions.

8 Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it legitimately. 9 This means understanding that the law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient, for the godless and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers, 10 fornicators, sodomites, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching 11 that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

Contrasting portraits of faithfulness and faithlessness

12 I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, 13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, 14 and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 15 The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the foremost. 16 But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. 17 To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.
18 I am giving you these instructions, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies made earlier about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, 19 having faith and a good conscience. By rejecting conscience, certain persons have suffered shipwreck in the faith; 20 among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, so that they may learn not to blaspheme.

[1 Timothy 2]
Instruction on prayer

1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. 3 This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, 6 who gave himself a ransom for all — this was attested at the right time. 7 For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

The proper demeanor of faithful women

8 I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument; 9 also that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, 10 but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. 11 Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. 12 I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. 15 Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.
[1 Timothy 3]
Living in the church of God (part one)

1 The saying is sure: whoever aspires to the office of bishop desires a noble task. 2 Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once, temperate, sensible, respectable, hospitable, an apt teacher, 3 not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and not a lover of money. 4 He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way — 5 for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church? 6 He must not be a recent convert, or he may be puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace and the snare of the devil.

8 Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; 9 they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. 10 And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. 11 Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; 13 for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

14 I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, 15 if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth. 16 Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great:

- He was revealed in flesh,
- vindicated in spirit,
- seen by angels,
- proclaimed among Gentiles,
- believed in throughout the world,
- taken up in glory.
[1 Timothy 4]
The contrast of true and false teaching (part two)

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron. 3 They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, provided it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is sanctified by God's word and by prayer.

6 If you put these instructions before the brothers and sisters, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound teaching that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with profane myths and old wives' tales. Train yourself in godliness, 8 for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 9 The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. 10 For to this end we toil and struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

11 These are the things you must insist on and teach. 12 Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. 13 Until I arrive, give attention to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. 14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. 15 Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. 16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.
[1 Timothy 5]
Living in the church of God (part two)

1 Do not speak harshly to an older man, but speak to him as to a father, to younger men as brothers, to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters — with absolute purity.

3 Honor widows who are really widows. 4 If a widow has children or grandchildren, they should first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some repayment to their parents; for this is pleasing in God's sight. 5 The real widow, left alone, has set her hope on God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day; 6 but the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. 7 Give these commands as well, so that they may be above reproach. 8 And whoever does not provide for relatives, and especially for family members, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

9 Let a widow be put on the list if she is not less than sixty years old and has been married only once; 10 she must be well attested for her good works, as one who has brought up children, shown hospitality, washed the saints' feet, helped the afflicted, and devoted herself to doing good in every way. 11 But refuse to put younger widows on the list; for when their sensual desires alienate them from Christ, they want to marry, 12 and so they incur condemnation for having violated their first pledge. 13 Besides that, they learn to be idle, gadgling about from house to house; and they are not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not say. 14 So I would have younger widows marry, bear children, and manage their households, so as to give the adversary no occasion to revile us. 15 For some have already turned away to follow Satan. 16 If any believing woman has relatives who are really widows, let her assist them; let the church not be burdened, so that it can assist those who are real widows.

17 Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching; 18 for the scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves to be paid." 19 Never accept any accusation against an elder except on the evidence of two or three
witnesses. 20 As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest also may stand in fear. 21 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of the elect angels, I warn you to keep these instructions without prejudice, doing nothing on the basis of partiality. 22 Do not ordain anyone hastily, and do not participate in the sins of others; keep yourself pure.

23 No longer drink only water, but take a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.

24 The sins of some people are conspicuous and precede them to judgment, while the sins of others follow them there. 25 So also good works are conspicuous; and even when they are not, they cannot remain hidden.

[1 Timothy 6]

1 Let all who are under the yoke of slavery regard their masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be blasphemed. 2 Those who have believing masters must not be disrespectful to them on the ground that they are members of the church; rather they must serve them all the more, since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved.

The contrast of true and false teaching (part three)

Teach and urge these duties. 3 Whoever teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that is in accordance with godliness, 4 is conceited, understanding nothing, and has a morbid craving for controversy and for disputes about words. From these come envy, dissension, slander, base suspicions, 5 and wrangling among those who are depraved in mind and bereft of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain. 6 Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; 7 for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; 8 but if we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. 9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires
that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.

11 But as for you, man of God, shun all this; pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called and for which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 In the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who in his testimony before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you 14 to keep the commandment without spot or blame until the manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 which he will bring about at the right time — he who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. 16 It is he alone who has immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.

17 As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, 19 thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

Timothy the guardian of the true teaching

20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the profane chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge; 21 by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith.

Concluding benediction

Grace be with you.
Introduction

The second epistle addressed to Paul's "beloved child" Timothy, despite its similarities in address and diction, has a more personal tone than the first. (See the Introduction to The Pastoral Epistles.) Less concerned with general church order and roles, here Paul is portrayed as near death, in testamentary fashion handing on to his spiritual heir, Timothy, the wisdom and truth he has accumulated through a life of mission, ministry and, above all, suffering for the gospel. The letter is set within a carefully scripted historical circumstance marked by Paul's imminent death and Timothy's bereavement, at a time of distortions to the sound doctrine or "healthy teaching" received from the apostle.

Timothy is known from Paul's letters as one of his most loyal disciples (Phil 2.19-22), who acts as a delegate to churches (1 Cor 4.17; 16.10) and co-sender of six of the Pauline epistles (2 Cor 1.1; Phil 1.1; Col 1.1; 1 Thess 1.1; 2 Thess 1.1; Philem 1), as well as being the recipient of two. According to Acts 16, Timothy's mother was Jewish and his father Greek, which is why Paul circumcised him in the face of probably Jewish persecution (Acts 16.3, an event not corroborated by the epistles). This letter sketches Timothy's life only in broad strokes, from his early immersion in the scriptures (3.15) and matrilineal Christian pedigree (1.5), to his authorization for ministry by the laying on of Paul's hands (1.6), and his present ecclesiastical challenges. More prominent in the letter, however, is the detailed and passionate portrait of Paul, imprisoned for the gospel in Rome (1.8, 16-17; 2.9), and forsaken by even his close friends (1.15; 4.10, 16), yet empowered by his Lord not only to endure suffering and death, but to celebrate them as the fitting culmination of his life of ministry and service (4.6-8, 17-18).
The theme of 2 Timothy is announced in 1.8: that Timothy and all who follow him should not be ashamed of the gospel or its representative, Paul, but should stand in fidelity to them, even to the point of suffering similarly. The structure of the letter reflects Timothy's alternatives, between Paul the prototypical example of faith, and the seductive, dangerous power of deceitful opposition. The letter implores Timothy to adhere to Paul's example of suffering for the gospel (1.12; 2.9-10; 3.11; 4.6-7, 16-18), which he is called upon to imitate (2.3; 4.5), as are all believers (2.11-12).

Second Timothy follows a regular epistolary structure with prescript (1.1-2), thanksgiving (1.3-7), and body (1.8-4.18). Timothy is urged to suffer for the gospel through contemplating the positive example of Paul (1.8-14) and the negative one afforded by those who deserted Paul in time of need (1.15-18). The exhortation to Timothy to be strong and teach others rightly (2.1-13) is contrasted with false teachers who must be contended with (2.14-26), for, as expected at the end time, signs of their appearance are already here (3.1-9). But Timothy is to follow in Paul's footsteps (3.10-4.5). These exhortations build up to the depiction of Paul's death-bed reflections on his life and its imminent conclusion (4.6-8). But the letter ends on a more hopeful note as the imprisoned apostle exults in his divine deliverance (both past and future) and issues spirited directives for the ministry, including a future visit from Timothy (4.8-18).

[2 Timothy 1]
Salutation, following the typical form of a Pauline letter

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

2 To Timothy, my beloved child:
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.
Thanksgiving for Timothy's faith

3 I am grateful to God — whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did — when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. 6 For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; 7 for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

Theme: co-suffering, rather than shame, for the gospel and its apostle

8 Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, 10 but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, 12 and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. 13 Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

Examples, worthy and unworthy

15 You are aware that all who are in Asia have turned away from me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes. 16 May the Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain; 17 when he arrived in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me 18 — may the Lord grant that he will
find mercy from the Lord on that day! And you know very well how much service he rendered in Ephesus.

[2 Timothy 2]  
Timothy's charge to suffer for the gospel

1 You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; 2 and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. 3 Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No one serving in the army gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier's aim is to please the enlisting officer. 5 And in the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules. 6 It is the farmer who does the work who ought to have the first share of the crops. 7 Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

8 Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David — that is my gospel, 9 for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. 10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. 11 The saying is sure:
   If we have died with him, we will also live with him;
12 if we endure, we will also reign with him;
   if we deny him, he will also deny us;
13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful —
   for he cannot deny himself.

Strategies for proper combat with false teachers

14 Remind them of this, and warn them before God that they are to avoid wrangling over words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening. 15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth. 16 Avoid profane chatter, for it will lead people into more and more impiety, 17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have swerved from the truth by claiming that the resurrection has already
taken place. They are upsetting the faith of some. 19 But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who calls on the name of the Lord turn away from wickedness."

20 In a large house there are utensils not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for special use, some for ordinary. 21 All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become special utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work. 22 Shun youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 23 Have nothing to do with stupid and senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. 24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, patient, 25 correcting opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, 26 and that they may escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

[2 Timothy 3]
End-time now: a close-up picture of the opposition

1 You must understand this, that in the last days distressing times will come. 2 For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power. Avoid them! 6 For among them are those who make their way into households and captivate silly women, overwhelmed by their sins and swayed by all kinds of desires, 7 who are always being instructed and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth. 8 As Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these people, of corrupt mind and counterfeit faith, also oppose the truth. 9 But they will not make much progress, because, as in the case of those two men, their folly will become plain to everyone.
Timothy's charge to steadfastness in his ministry

10 Now you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, 11 my persecutions, and my suffering the things that happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. What persecutions I endured! Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. 12 Indeed, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. 13 But wicked people and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving others and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, 15 and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

[2 Timothy 4]

1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: 2 proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. 5 As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.

Paul's reflections on his impending death; an update from prison

6 As for me, I am already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing.
9 Do your best to come to me soon, 10 for Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful in my ministry. 12 I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus. 13 When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments. 14 Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will pay him back for his deeds. 15 You also must beware of him, for he strongly opposed our message.

16 At my first defense no one came to my support, but all deserted me. May it not be counted against them! 17 But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and save me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Epistolary greetings

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus. 20 Erastus remained in Corinth; Trophimus I left ill in Miletus. 21 Do your best to come before winter. Eubulus sends greetings to you, as do Pudens and Linus and Claudia and all the brothers and sisters.

Concluding benediction

22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.
Introduction

This epistle directed to Paul's envoy and coworker, Titus, bears many similarities to 1 Timothy. It is cast as a reminder and incitement to Titus to complete the things which remain to be done in his mission on Crete (1.5). Acts and the other Pauline letters make no mention of an apostolic mission to this, the largest of the Aegean islands, and home to a large Jewish community. Those who argue that the letter is genuine contend that such a mission could have taken place after Paul's imprisonment at Rome recounted in Acts 28, while those who regard it as pseudepigraphical (see the Introduction to The Pastoral Epistles for the terms of the debate) think the author has chose Crete simply as a locale representing quintessential disobedience (1.12), or because of a later tradition associating Titus with the island.

Although he is never mentioned in Acts, we are well informed about Titus from Paul's letters. According to Gal 2.3 he was a Gentile who accompanied Paul on his famous conference with the Jerusalem apostles, where he served as a kind of test case for the noncircumcision of Gentile converts. In the pastoral ministry to Corinth Titus played a crucial role, first as a key administrator of the collection for the saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor 8.6, 16-17, 23; 12.18), and later as Paul's diplomatic envoy who successfully brokered a reconciliation between the apostle and the church, which had harbored doubts about Paul's legitimacy and financial reliability (2 Cor 2.13; 7.6-7, 13-16).

Paul delegates two tasks to Titus in this letter, under the heading of "putting things in order" (1.5): exhorting the faithful in sound teaching (1.9, 13; 2.1-2, 8), and refuting the opposition (2.2, 15; cf. 1.9). The mainstay of sound teaching, as the author defines it, is strict maintenance of a patriarchal church order and the proper submission it demands (2.5, 9; 3.1; contrast the characterization of the opponents as
insubordinate" or "rebellious" in 1.6, 10). This logic of the "household code" as applied to the Christian house church reflects the wider cultural context of the Greco-Roman world in the Imperial period and is characteristic of the Pastoral epistles. The second task, the refutation of opponents (fellow Christians of Jewish background who adhere to the requirements of the laws of Moses, the Torah, such as dietary laws), is addressed by the author mostly in a negative fashion, through sharp invective and ridicule (1.10-16; 2.8; 3.9-11) rather than theological debate, which the author appears to eye largely with suspicion (1.13-14; 3.9-11).

Though short, this epistle is theologically dense, requiring readers to pause and reconstruct the underlying gospel narrative and theological concepts, which the author often invokes by terse shorthand. Passages such as 1.1-3; 2.11-14; 3.4-7 allow for instructive comparison with other tight Pauline formulations (such as Gal 4.1-11; Rom 3.21-26; 2 Tim 1.9-10), so the theology constructed here can be appreciated both for its distinctiveness and for its continuity with earlier traditions.

The epistle to Titus is framed as a commissioning letter for Paul's envoy to Crete. After the usual epistolary prescript (1.1-4, which is expanded with a theological creed), the body of the letter focuses on Titus's dual commission to correct things on Crete and appoint elders (1.5-16). The basis for his work follows in sections devoted to the submission expected of various roles in the church (2.1-10), the theological basis for pious living (2.11-15), and a final section bringing the two themes — of submission and good works — together (3.1-11). The epistle concludes with a discussion of travel plans (3.12-13), a final exhortation to good works (3.14), epistolary greetings (3.15a), and a benediction (3.15b).

[Titus 1]
Salutation

1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that is in accordance with godliness, 2 in the hope of eternal life that God, who never lies, promised before the ages began — 3 in due time he
revealed his word through the proclamation with which I have been entrusted by the command of God our Savior,

4 To Titus, my loyal child in the faith we share: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

**Titus's commission in Crete**

5 I left you behind in Crete for this reason, so that you should put in order what remained to be done, and should appoint elders in every town, as I directed you: 6 someone who is blameless, married only once, whose children are believers, not accused of debauchery and not rebellious. 7 For a bishop, as God's steward, must be blameless; he must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or addicted to wine or violent or greedy for gain; 8 but he must be hospitable, a lover of goodness, prudent, upright, devout, and self-controlled. 9 He must have a firm grasp of the word that is trustworthy in accordance with the teaching, so that he may be able both to preach with sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict it.

10 There are also many rebellious people, idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision; 11 they must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for sordid gain what it is not right to teach. 12 It was one of them, their very own prophet, who said, "Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons." 13 That testimony is true. For this reason rebuke them sharply, so that they may become sound in the faith, 14 not paying attention to Jewish myths or to commandments of those who reject the truth. 15 To the pure all things are pure, but to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure. Their very minds and consciences are corrupted. 16 They profess to know God, but they deny him by their actions. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.
[Titus 2]
The proclamation of sound teaching in submission

1 But as for you, teach what is consistent with sound doctrine. 2 Tell the older men to be temperate, serious, prudent, and sound in faith, in love, and in endurance.

3 Likewise, tell the older women to be reverent in behavior, not to be slanderers or slaves to drink; they are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, chaste, good managers of the household, kind, being submissive to their husbands, so that the word of God may not be discredited.

6 Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. 7 Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, 8 and sound speech that cannot be censured; then any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us.

9 Tell slaves to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect; they are not to talk back, 10 not to pilfer, but to show complete and perfect fidelity, so that in everything they may be an ornament to the doctrine of God our Savior.

The theological basis for present pious living

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, 12 training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. 14 He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

15 Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one look down on you.
Submission and good works are the marks of the saved

1 Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, 2 to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show every courtesy to everyone. 3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. 4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. 6 This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. 8 The saying is sure.

I desire that you insist on these things, so that those who have come to believe in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works; these things are excellent and profitable to everyone. 9 But avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 After a first and second admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone who causes divisions, 11 since you know that such a person is perverted and sinful, being self-condemned.

Travel plans; concluding exhortation to good works

12 When I send Artemas to you, or Tychicus, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. 13 Make every effort to send Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way, and see that they lack nothing. 14 And let people learn to devote themselves to good works in order to meet urgent needs, so that they may not be unproductive.
Epistolary greetings and benediction

15 All who are with me send greetings to you. Greet those who love us in the faith.
   Grace be with all of you.
Introduction

This enigmatic text is a piece of the apostle Paul's business correspondence, a curious but intentional blend of personal and public appeal, addressed to three named recipients (Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus) and to the church that meets in one their houses (v. 2). The letters shows Paul's epistolary style at its very best, and employs some of his most subtle rhetoric to make a request of one of the recipients — probably Philemon, because he is the first named. The exact nature of the request, however, is the basis for the enigma that the epistle to Philemon represents.

In order to interpret this brief epistle, one must reconstruct the situation it presupposes, but to do so the reader must largely depend upon the letter itself. Paul writes this letter while he is in prison (vv. 1, 9-10, but the precise location is not specified), where he has been joined by a person named Onesimus, whom, Paul recounts, he has converted to the gospel while there (v. 10). This Onesimus, who is the slave of Philemon, (v. 16), is the subject of the letter, and the object of Paul's appeal (v. 10). While the circumstances that led to Onesimus's encounter with Paul are not described in the letter itself, two quite different possibilities suggest themselves: Either Onesimus ran away from his master, perhaps after causing him some financial loss (vv. 15, 18), or Onesimus was sent by his owner to serve Paul in prison (v. 13), much like Epaphroditus appears to have been sent to Paul in prison by the Philippians (Phil 2.25-30). The advantage of the latter possibility is that it explains how Onesimus came to be in prison with Paul, whereas the former option must explain why a slave would run away to a prison, though this can perhaps be overcome by the suggestion that Onesimus, according to legal precedent, sought out a friend of his master's to act as an intermediary for himself. The precise occasion of the letter is the moment of Paul's sending Onesimus back to his master.
(v. 12). The letter is intended to accompany Onesimus and register a plea on his behalf (v. 10). What exactly is Paul asking Philemon to do?

Because Paul formulates his request for Onesimus in intentionally vague and suggestively persuasive terms, a certain judgment is hard to make. Readers should try out at least three possible interpretations: (1) Paul is asking Philemon to receive Onesimus back into service and forgive his transgressions, whatever they might have been (vv. 17-18); (2) Paul is primarily asking Philemon to send Onesimus back to him to continue to serve his physical needs while in prison (vv. 13-14); (3) Paul is strongly hinting that Philemon should not only receive Onesimus back, but free him (vv. 16, 21). Each of these options has some grounding in the text, and the choice of which the reader adopts depends upon which verses are thought to be the highlight of the argument, and upon how one assesses Paul's tone at various points. One thing, however, is certain about this letter: Paul engages in full-strength arm-twisting of Philemon to do his "good deed" (v. 14). But the final decision of what to do is left up to Philemon himself to decide — in the context of a range of onlookers among his fellow Christians! One of the most remarkable things about this letter is that it was preserved at all, and ultimately incorporated in the canonical collection of Paul's letters, which perhaps gives us a hint about Philemon's ultimate decision.

This letter has played a key role in the history of Christian social ethics disproportionate to its length. The adequacy of Paul's attitude and actions toward the institution of slavery, both in his context and as a legacy for Christian social thought, continues to be debated.

The structure of Philemon is neatly exact. After the epistolary salutation (vv. 1-3) and thanksgiving (vv. 4-7), which praise Philemon for his past benefactions, in the epistolary body (vv. 8-22) Paul makes a fresh request for the present situation involving Onesimus through various forms of subtle and overt appeal, ending with a forecast of his impending visit. He closes the letter with epistolary greetings from missionary coworkers that accent the public arena of Philemon's decision.
1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving for Philemon's past good deeds

4 When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. 6 I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. 7 I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

Paul's appeal for another good deed from Philemon

8 For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, 9 yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love — and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. 10 I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. 11 Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. 12 I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. 13 I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; 14 but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. 15 Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, 16 no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother — especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.
17 So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. 18 If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. 20 Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

22 One thing more — prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping through your prayers to be restored to you.

Greetings and concluding benediction

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, 24 and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.
HEBREWS

Introduction

Traditionally known as "The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews," this New Testament writing can best be understood as an anonymous sermon written to encourage an early Christian community to continued faith and hope in the face of hardship. In a manner unique among New Testament books, the sermon develops the image of Christ as the great high priest who fulfills and complete the Jewish system of sacrifice. In a sophisticated rhetorical style, the author alternates argument and exhortation. Although it concludes with greetings and other features of a letter (13.22-25), the work has not opening greeting and no identification of the author or of those addressed. Rather, the author refers to it as a "word of exhortation" (13.22) a phrase used in Acts 13.15 to describe a synagogue sermon of Paul.

When the New Testament was being formed, this anonymous sermon was attributed to Paul, presumably because of the growing authority of Paul's name and reputation as a letter writer. The early church leaders Origen, Clement, and Tertullian, however, recognized the differences in style and theology between Hebrews and Paul's letters. Clement argued that Luke translated Paul's Hebrew original into Greek and Origen suggested that a disciple of Paul wrote the letter based on Paul's notes. Modern interpreters have suggested other authors, including Apollos and Prisca (Priscilla). There is not sufficient historical evidence, however, to prove that any person named in the New Testament was the author of Hebrews.

Like the name of the author, the precise date of Hebrews cannot be determined. Because the argument depends on description of the Temple sacrifice, some scholars argue that it must originate before the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. Because the work deals with the exegesis of scriptural texts, however, the literal existence of Temple
sacrifice is not necessary for the argument to be persuasive. The probably date of the work therefore falls somewhere in the range of 60 to 100 CE.

Despite the title "to the Hebrews," the audience probably consists of people of both Jewish and Gentile background. Evidence within the sermon for the identity of its audience suggests that the community has suffered hardship and persecution (10.32) and that some may have renounced their faith (2.3; 6.4-6; 12.25). The central role of interpretation of the Jewish scriptures (used by the author in their ancient Greek translation, the Septuagint [LXX]) in the argument of the sermon shows the continued importance of the Bible and of Jewish tradition for those who believed in Christ. The author seeks both to ground the argument in scripture and to argue that Jesus is superior to Jewish traditions. Within the audience were both Jewish Christians well versed in scripture and Gentile Christians who also would have found such arguments persuasive.

Because so many of the standard historical introductory questions about Hebrews are uncertain, Hebrews can best be read by leaving those questions open and exploring the work as a distinctive Christian writing. The work attempts to interpret the significance of Jesus Christ and his death in categories familiar to the author and audience. Its readers could appreciate the sophisticated rhetorical style, follow the repetition and development of images and vocabulary, and understand the logic of the author's argument in the context of Platonic and allegorical interpretation and of other early Christian language.

Hebrews is a document in which themes and motifs anticipate and reinforce each other. The sermon is organized into four main sections. Heb 1.1-4.13 explores the word of God spoken through the Son. Heb 4.14-10.31 interprets Jesus as the eternal high priest against the background of the Israelite priesthood. The third part, 10.32-12.29, describes faith as insight into a heavenly world of reality. Finally, chapter 13 gives practical advice and greetings.
[Hebrews 1]
Work of God spoken through the Son; the prologue; God has spoken through a Son

1 Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. 3 He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

The superiority of the Son to the angels

5 For to which of the angels did God ever say,
   "You are my Son;
   today I have begotten you"?
Or again,
   "I will be his Father,
   and he will be my Son"?
6 And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says,
   "Let all God's angels worship him."
7 Of the angels he says,
   "He makes his angels winds,
   and his servants flames of fire."
8 But of the Son he says,
   "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever,
   and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom.
9 You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness;
   therefore God, your God, has anointed you
   with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."
10 And,
   "In the beginning, Lord, you founded the earth,
   and the heavens are the work of your hands;
11 they will perish, but you remain;
   they will all wear out like clothing;
12 like a cloak you will roll them up,
   and like clothing they will be changed.
But you are the same,
   and your years will never end."
13 But to which of the angels has he ever said,
   "Sit at my right hand
   until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"?
14 Are not all angels spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

[Hebrews 2]
Exhortation not to fall away

1 Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. 2 For if the message declared through angels was valid, and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty, 3 how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, 4 while God added his testimony by signs and wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to his will.

Jesus' exaltation through abasement

5 Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. 6 But someone has testified somewhere,
   "What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
   or mortals, that you care for them?
7 You have made them for a little while lower than the angels;
   you have crowned them with glory and honor,
8 subjecting all things under their feet."
Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, 9 but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.
It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, 12 saying,  
"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

And again,  
"I will put my trust in him."  
And again,  
"Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

14 Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. 16 For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

**[Hebrews 3]**

**Comparison of Jesus and Moses**

1 Therefore, brothers and sisters, holy partners in a heavenly calling, consider that Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses also "was faithful in all God's house." 3 Yet Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. 4 (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) 5 Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that would be spoken later. 6 Christ, however, was faithful over God's house as a son, and we are his house if we hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope.
Entering God's rest

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says,  
   "Today, if you hear his voice,  
8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,  
     as on the day of testing in the wilderness,  
9 where your ancestors put me to the test,  
     though they had seen my works  
   Therefore I was angry with that generation,  
      and I said, 'They always go astray in their hearts,  
     and they have not known my ways.'  
11 As in my anger I swore,  
     'They will not enter my rest.'"  
12 Take care, brothers and sisters, that none of you may have an evil,  
    unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. 13 But exhort  
    one another every day, as long as it is called "today," so that none of  
    you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have  
    become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to  
    the end. 15 As it is said,  
     "Today, if you hear his voice,  
    do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."  
16 Now who were they who heard and yet were rebellious? Was it not  
    all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses? 17 But with  
    whom was he angry forty years? Was it not those who sinned, whose  
    bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they  
    would not enter his rest, if not to those who were disobedient? 19 So  
    we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

[Hebrews 4]  
The faithfulness required of Christians

1 Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest is still open, let us  
    take care that none of you should seem to have failed to reach it. 2 For  
    indeed the good news came to us just as to them; but the message  
    they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by  
    faith with those who listened. 3 For we who have believed enter that  
    rest, just as God has said,
"As in my anger I swore,
'They shall not enter my rest,'"
though his works were finished at the foundation of the world. 4 For in one place it speaks about the seventh day as follows, "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." 5 And again in this place it says, "They shall not enter my rest." 6 Since therefore it remains open for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, 7 again he sets a certain day — "today" — saying through David much later, in the words already quoted,
"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts."
8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not speak later about another day. 9 So then, a sabbath rest still remains for the people of God; 10 for those who enter God's rest also cease from their labors as God did from his. 11 Let us therefore make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs.

12 Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

**Jesus as the eternal high priest; Christ as the great high priest**

14 Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
[Hebrews 5]

1 Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; 3 and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. 4 And one does not presume to take this honor, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

5 So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,
"You are my Son,
today I have begotten you";
6 as he says also in another place,
"You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek."

7 In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; 9 and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, 10 having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Exhortation to hope

11 About this we have much to say that is hard to explain, since you have become dull in understanding. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic elements of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food; 13 for everyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is unskilled in the word of righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.
Therefore let us go on toward perfection, leaving behind the basic teaching about Christ, and not laying again the foundation: repentance from dead works and faith toward God, instruction about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And we will do this, if God permits. For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, since on their own they are crucifying again the Son of God and are holding him up to contempt. Ground that drinks up the rain falling on it repeatedly, and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and on the verge of being cursed; its end is to be burned over.

Even though we speak in this way, beloved, we are confident of better things in your case, things that belong to salvation. For God is not unjust; he will not overlook your work and the love that you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do. And we want each one of you to show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope to the very end, so that you may not become sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

When God made a promise to Abraham, because he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Human beings, of course, swear by someone greater than themselves, and an oath given as confirmation puts an end to all dispute. In the same way, when God desired to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he guaranteed it by an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God would prove false, we who have taken refuge might be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us. We have this hope,
sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

[Hebrews 7]
The priesthood of Melchizedek and the Levitical priesthood compared

1 This "King Melchizedek of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham as he was returning from defeating the kings and blessed him"; 2 and to him Abraham apportioned "one-tenth of everything." His name, in the first place, means "king of righteousness"; next he is also king of Salem, that is, "king of peace." 3 Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

4 See how great he is! Even Abraham the patriarch gave him a tenth of the spoils. 5 And those descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office have a commandment in the law to collect tithes from the people, that is, from their kindred, though these also are descended from Abraham. 6 But this man, who does not belong to their ancestry, collected tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had received the promises. 7 It is beyond dispute that the inferior is blessed by the superior. 8 In the one case, tithes are received by those who are mortal; in the other, by one of whom it is testified that he lives. 9 One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, 10 for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

The Levitical priesthood is inadequate

11 Now if perfection had been attainable through the levitical priesthood — for the people received the law under this priesthood — what further need would there have been to speak of another priest arising according to the order of Melchizedek, rather than one according to the order of Aaron? 12 For when there is a change in the priesthood, there is necessarily a change in the law as well. 13 Now the one of whom these things are spoken belonged to another tribe, from
which no one has ever served at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.

15 It is even more obvious when another priest arises, resembling Melchizedek, 16 one who has become a priest, not through a legal requirement concerning physical descent, but through the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it is attested of him,

"You are a priest forever,
    according to the order of Melchizedek."
18 There is, on the one hand, the abrogation of an earlier commandment because it was weak and ineffectual 19 (for the law made nothing perfect); there is, on the other hand, the introduction of a better hope, through which we approach God.

20 This was confirmed with an oath; for others who became priests took their office without an oath, 21 but this one became a priest with an oath, because of the one who said to him,

"The Lord has sworn
    and will not change his mind,
'You are a priest forever!'" —
22 accordingly Jesus has also become the guarantee of a better covenant.

23 Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; 24 but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. 25 Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Summary of the merits of the high priest, Jesus the Son of God

26 For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. 27 Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the
word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.

[Hebrews 8]
Old and new ministry

1 Now the main point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent that the Lord, and not any mortal, has set up. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; hence it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. 4 Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law. 5 They offer worship in a sanctuary that is a sketch and shadow of the heavenly one; for Moses, when he was about to erect the tent, was warned, "See that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown you on the mountain." 6 But Jesus has now obtained a more excellent ministry, and to that degree he is the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted through better promises. 7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need to look for a second one.

Old and new covenant

8 God finds fault with them when he says:
"The days are surely coming, says the Lord,
when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel
and with the house of Judah;
9 not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors,
on the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt;
for they did not continue in my covenant,
and so I had no concern for them, says the Lord."
10 This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord:
    I will put my laws in their minds,
    and write them on their hearts,
    and I will be their God,
    and they shall be my people.
11 And they shall not teach one another
    or say to each other, 'Know the Lord,'
    for they shall all know me,
    from the least of them to the greatest.
12 For I will be merciful toward their iniquities,
    and I will remember their sins no more."
13 In speaking of "a new covenant," he has made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old will soon disappear.

[Hebrews 9]
The earthly sanctuary

1 Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. 2 For a tent was constructed, the first one, in which were the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the Presence; this is called the Holy Place. 3 Behind the second curtain was a tent called the Holy of Holies. 4 In it stood the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which there were a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; 5 above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot speak now in detail.

6 Such preparations having been made, the priests go continually into the first tent to carry out their ritual duties; 7 but only the high priest goes into the second, and he but once a year, and not without taking the blood that he offers for himself and for the sins committed unintentionally by the people. 8 By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the sanctuary has not yet been disclosed as long as the first tent is still standing. 9 This is a symbol of the present time, during which gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper, 10 but deal only with food and drink and
various baptisms, regulations for the body imposed until the time comes to set things right.

The sacrifice of Christ

11 But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), 12 he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls, with the sprinkling of the ashes of a heifer, sanctifies those who have been defiled so that their flesh is purified, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to worship the living God!

15 For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, because a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions under the first covenant. 16 Where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. 17 For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. 18 Hence not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment had been told to all the people by Moses in accordance with the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the scroll itself and all the people, 20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God has ordained for you." 21 And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. 22 Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

23 Thus it was necessary for the sketches of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves need better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.
25 Nor was it to offer himself again and again, as the high priest enters the Holy Place year after year with blood that is not his own; 26 for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

[Hebrews 10]
Old and new sacrifice

1 Since the law has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered year after year, make perfect those who approach. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased being offered, since the worshipers, cleansed once for all, would no longer have any consciousness of sin? 3 But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin year after year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. 5 Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; 6 in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.
7 Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God' (in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."
8 When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), 9 then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. 10 And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins. 12 But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, "he sat
down at the right hand of God," 13 and since then has been waiting "until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet." 14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. 15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us, for after saying, 16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds," 17 he also adds, "I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more." 18 Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

Exhortations and warnings

19 Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

26 For if we willfully persist in sin after having received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy "on the testimony of two or three witnesses." 29 How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by those who have spurned the Son of God, profaned the blood of the covenant by which they were sanctified, and outraged the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know the one who said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
Living by faith and its power

32 But recall those earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, 33 sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and persecution, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. 34 For you had compassion for those who were in prison, and you cheerfully accepted the plundering of your possessions, knowing that you yourselves possessed something better and more lasting. 35 Do not, therefore, abandon that confidence of yours; it brings a great reward. 36 For you need endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 For yet "in a very little while, the one who is coming will come and will not delay; 38 but my righteous one will live by faith. My soul takes no pleasure in anyone who shrinks back."
39 But we are not among those who shrink back and so are lost, but among those who have faith and so are saved.

[Hebrews 11]
A cloud of witnesses to faith

1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. 2 Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

4 By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith he still speaks. 5 By faith Enoch was taken so that he did not experience death; and "he was not found, because God had taken him." For it was attested before he was taken away that "he had pleased God." 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. 7 By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household; by this he
condemned the world and became an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith.

8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11 By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old — and Sarah herself was barren — because he considered him faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, "as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore."

13 All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, 14 for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

17 By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, 18 of whom he had been told, "It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you." 19 He considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead — and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back. 20 By faith Isaac invoked blessings for the future on Jacob and Esau. 21 By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, "bowing in worship over the top of his staff." 22 By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites and gave instructions about his burial.
23 By faith Moses was hidden by his parents for three months after his birth, because they saw that the child was beautiful; and they were not afraid of the king's edict. 24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called a son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He considered abuse suffered for the Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to the reward. 27 By faith he left Egypt, unafraid of the king's anger; for he persevered as though he saw him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

29 By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. 31 By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.

32 And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets — 33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. 36 Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented — 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

39 Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better so that they would not, apart from us, be made perfect.
1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, 2 looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

The discipline of God

3 Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children —

"My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or lose heart when you are punished by him;
6 for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts."

7 Endure trials for the sake of discipline. God is treating you as children; for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline? 8 If you do not have that discipline in which all children share, then you are illegitimate and not his children. 9 Moreover, we had human parents to discipline us, and we respected them. Should we not be even more willing to be subject to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share his holiness. 11 Now, discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

12 Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.
14 Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and through it many become defiled. 16 See to it that no one becomes like Esau, an immoral and godless person, who sold his birthright for a single meal. 17 You know that later, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, even though he sought the blessing with tears.

Mount Sinai and Mount Zion contrasted

18 You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. 20 (For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned to death." 21 Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear.") 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, 23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

25 See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! 26 At that time his voice shook the earth; but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven." 27 This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of what is shaken — that is, created things — so that what cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; 29 for indeed our God is a consuming fire.
Practical instructions to the community and greetings; the sermon concludes

1 Let mutual love continue. 2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. 3 Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. 4 Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. 5 Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." 6 So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"

7 Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. 9 Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings; for it is well for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by regulations about food, which have not benefited those who observe them. 10 We have an altar from which those who officiate in the tent have no right to eat. 11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. 12 Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. 13 Let us then go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured. 14 For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. 15 Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. 16 Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls and will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with sighing — for that would be harmful to you.
Greetings, blessing, and postscript

18 Pray for us; we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. 19 I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you very soon.

20 Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

22 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. 23 I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been set free; and if he comes in time, he will be with me when I see you. 24 Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy send you greetings. 25 Grace be with all of you.
JAMES

Introduction

This letter takes its name from the authority and tradition associated with James, the brother of Jesus (Mt 13.55; Mk 6.3; Gal 1.19), who eventually became the leader of the church in Jerusalem (Gal 2.9, 12; Acts 12.17; 15.13; 21.18). Throughout the document, a consistent tone of moral authority (59 of 108 versions are in the imperative) determines its literary character as a series of moral instructions (parenesis or exhortation) and wisdom sayings, inspired by different parts of the Bible. The advice alludes both to the Hebrew Bible and to the Jesus tradition (particularly that of Matthew and Luke); there may also be references to Paul's teaching (2.14-26). The letter thereby combines pastoral, prophetic, and teaching moods appropriate to address the community crises. Its basic message is an urgent appeal for those who call themselves Christians to adopt a courageous faith that will help them cope effectively with the trials of life, and will produce in them heightened moral integrity and loving actions.

Directed by Jewish Christian congregations ("your assembly," lit. "synagogue," 2.2) toward the close of the first century, this letter was probably written in at least two stages. The original text was a sermon by James in the months prior to his martyrdom in the mid-60s. Then, someone skilled in Hellenistic rhetoric edited, expanded, and distributed the sermon in the form of a circular letter, probably in the late 80s or 90s. It went to Diaspora churches that were in disarray and needed to hear again the authoritative voice of the Jerusalem church's leader. Its aim was to instruct Jewish Christians experiencing tensions between their allegiance to the Torah and their newfound faith in Jesus. In this sense, James and Jude are the last New Testament echoes of Jewish Christianity.
In dealing with issues of concern to Jewish Christians, the letter (particularly in 2.14-26) appears to oppose the thinking of Paul on the issue of the relation between faith and works, and the means by which the believer attains "justification" or the state of right relationship with God. Paul and James each interpret a verse from the Hebrew Bible — "And he [Abraham] believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Gen 15.6) — to support his own view (Paul in Gal 3.6-14, James in Jas 2.21-24). For Paul, the believer's justification comes through faith, not works (Rom 4.16-5.2); for James, "faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (2.17). The conflict, however, is more apparent than real. For Paul, faith is primarily trust in God (Rom 4.5), a sense of the word that James also shares (1.5); but, in his critique of faith, James means by it essentially the assent to ideas about God without any personal relationship or commitment to inform them: "Even the demons believe" (2.19). James sees works as the acts that spring from the love of the believer for God (2.14), whereas for Paul works are the external observations of ritual, like circumcision, regarded in isolation from any connection to one's relationship to God.

The letter of James may strike the reader as having little in the way of unity and coherence, but rather as skipping from one topic to another without much connection. Its inherent unity, however, can be seen if one views the letter as a response to the situation in which these early Christians found themselves. The Christian assemblies were tiny minorities existing within large populations that were indifferent or hostile to their beliefs. The writer is concerned that these early Christian groups should not adopt, or fall back into, the values or the behavior of the surrounding population (4.4). From this comes the strategic mixture in the letter of the prophetic tradition (for instance, 2.5-7) and the wisdom tradition (for instance, 1.5-8). This combination is meant to help those who are struggling to live morally: the prophetic denunciations of arrogant wealth and immorality (2.6-7); 5.1-6) are strengthened and completed through the development of wisdom (3.13). Wisdom can serve both as a guide to behavior (for instance, guarding against malicious speech 3.8-10; 4.11) and as an aid to discernment (seeing the joy that lies beyond present suffering, 3.17-18). The testing to which the faithful are subjected will help them learn and be transformed (1.12): it will show them what really matters, and it can
be, if seen in the right way, a strengthening rather than a weakening ordeal. Thus, these communities will be built up through their sufferings (4.7-10), and their faith will be, not a substitute for acts of love (2.15-16), but rather a means to help them undertake such acts (1.22-27).

Martin Luther's cavalier assessment of James as "an epistle of straw" because it seemingly denigrated the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith (2.14-26) influenced its interpretation for many years. Yet as a witness to Jewish Christianity the letter of James constitutes "the second voice of Jesus," reminding Christians that a faith that fails to bear fruit in the moral life cannot save.

[James 1]
Salutation

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes in the Dispersion:
Greetings.

Faith that rejoices in trials

2 My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; 4 and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.

5 If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. 6 But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind; 7, 8 for the doubter, being double-minded and unstable in every way, must not expect to receive anything from the Lord.
A reversal of fortunes

9 Let the believer who is lowly boast in being raised up, 10 and the rich in being brought low, because the rich will disappear like a flower in the field. 11 For the sun rises with its scorching heat and withers the field; its flower falls, and its beauty perishes. It is the same way with the rich; in the midst of a busy life, they will wither away.

God who rewards faithful endurance

12 Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. 13 No one, when tempted, should say, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. 14 But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it; 15 then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved.

17 Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18 In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

Righteousness in word and deed

19 You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. 21 Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls.

22 But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. 23 For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; 24 for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. 25 But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and
persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act — they will be blessed in their doing.

Religion that is personal and social

26 If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. 27 Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

[James 2]
Faith and acts of discrimination

1 My brothers and sisters, do you with your acts of favoritism really believe in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ? 2 For if a person with gold rings and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and if a poor person in dirty clothes also comes in, 3 and if you take notice of the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Have a seat here, please," while to the one who is poor you say, "Stand there," or, "Sit at my feet," 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts? 5 Listen, my beloved brothers and sisters. Has not God chosen the poor in the world to be rich in faith and to be heirs of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? 6 But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who oppress you? Is it not they who drag you into court? 7 Is it not they who blaspheme the excellent name that was invoked over you?

8 You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." 9 But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. 11 For the one who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." Now if you do not commit adultery but if you murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. 12 So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. 13 For judgment will be without mercy to anyone who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.
The unity of faith and deeds

14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? 15 If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? 17 So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. 19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe — and shudder. 20 Do you want to be shown, you senseless person, that faith apart from works is barren? 21 Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. 23 Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," and he was called the friend of God. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute also justified by works when she welcomed the messengers and sent them out by another road? 26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.

[James 3]
Faithfulness through a disciplined tongue

1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. 2 For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. 3 If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. 4 Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. 5 So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.
How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! 6 And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. 7 For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, 8 but no one can tame the tongue — a restless evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. 10 From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? 12 Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

Two kinds of wisdom

13 Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. 15 Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. 16 For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

[James 4]
Faithlessness in the community

1 Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? 2 You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. 4 Adulterers! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5 Or do you suppose that it is
for nothing that the scripture says, "God yearns jealously for the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? 6 But he gives all the more grace; therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Corrective formulae: a call to repentance

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Lament and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy into dejection. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Warning against improper speech

11 Do not speak evil against one another, brothers and sisters. Whoever speaks evil against another or judges another, speaks evil against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. 12 There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. So who, then, are you to judge your neighbor?

Cautions to those who take God for granted

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a town and spend a year there, doing business and making money." 14 Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15 Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wishes, we will live and do this or that." 16 As it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. 17 Anyone, then, who knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, commits sin.
[James 5]

Warnings to the rich

1 Come now, you rich people, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you. 2 Your riches have rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten. 3 Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you, and it will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. 4 Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. 5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. 6 You have condemned and murdered the righteous one, who does not resist you.

A word of consolation to the faithful

7 Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. 8 You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. 9 Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! 10 As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 Indeed we call blessed those who showed endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

12 Above all, my beloved, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your "Yes" be yes and your "No" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.

A closing litany of pastoral concerns

13 Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. 14 Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has
committed sins will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. 17 Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. 18 Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest.

19 My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, 20 you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.
Introduction

The First Letter of Peter presents itself as a pastoral letter written by the apostle Peter from "Babylon," where he is accompanied by Silvanus (= Silas) and Mark (5.12-13), to churches in five provinces of Asia Minor (1.1). Some scholars continue to understand this as a literal description, with Silvanus often regarded as the actual writer at Peter's behest. The situation indirectly described by the letter, however, points to a time after Peter's death. The language, style, content, and thought would seem inappropriate to Peter the Galilean fisherman and missionary to the Jews (Gal 2.9). The excellent and sophisticated Greek, the lack of references to the life and teaching of the earthly Jesus, the christological emphasis on the cosmic Christ, and the address to Gentile Christians who had previously lived a sinful, idolatrous life (1.14, 18,21; 2.1, 9-11, 25; 4.3) point to a disciple of Peter writing in the name of the revered apostle. Thus most critical scholars interpret the document as a letter from the last decade of the first century CE, written in Peter's name in order to claim that its teaching represented the apostolic faith. The letter itself indicates it was written by a presbyter (elder; 5.1) of the Roman church — the "Babylon" of 5.13 was a common cryptogram for Rome at the end of the first century (see, for instance, Rev 17.5, 9; 18.2, 10, 21). The references to Silvanus and Mark, both known companions of Paul (1 Thess 1.1; Philem 24), are part of the fictive literary picture that combines elements of Pauline tradition with the figure of Peter, as is the Pauline letter form itself adopted by 1 Peter. The letter thus represents the combination of Pauline and Petrine traditions in the church of Rome at the end of the first century, set forth in Peter's name as a pastoral letter to churches struggling in a difficult social situation.
First Peter is a real letter, a united composition. It is not, as has often been thought, a baptismal homily or liturgy to which epistolary elements have been added secondarily. The letter addresses a critical situation in the lives of the addressees, who once participated in the social and cultural life of their communities, but since their conversion to Christ have become marginalized and abused. The society to which they once belonged now considers them an unwelcome, even dangerous sectarian movement (as in Acts 28.22 — "the sect everywhere spoken against"). While Christians are called to suffer "for the name" (4.15-16), the abuse is mostly verbal (2.22-23; 3.9-12, 16). The positive attitude toward the state (2.13-17) indicates there is as yet no overt government persecution, except perhaps for occasional arbitrary acts by subordinate officials. First Peter offers realistic encouragement and instruction to Christians attempting to live faithfully in such a situation.

The author does not present a theological essay, but the instructions he gives are based on deep theological reflection, expressed indirectly by the narrative milieu the letter projects: God created the world (4.19); God chose an elect people (2.9-10); God sent the Christ who was rejected by humans but exalted by God (2.4); God sent the Spirit and Christian evangelists who established a new people of God and converted the addressees (1.12); and God will send Christ in the near future to conduct the final judgment (1.7, 13; 4.7). Christians live their lives in the time between Christ's resurrection and return. The christological pattern of suffering and exaltation is foundational for the ethic he commends: Just as Christ was misunderstood and suffered unjustly for the sake of others, so Christians are now called to follow "in his steps" (2.21). Just as all Christians are instructed to respect the government authorities (2.13-17), so the most vulnerable Christians, slaves of unbelieving master and wives of unbelieving husbands, are instructed to fit complacently into the given structures of society as a testimony to the faith (2.18-3.6). Such behavior may convert the oppressor (3.1-2), but if not it is still following the example set by Christ and will be vindicated at the last judgment that is soon to come (4.5-7).
The structure of First Peter represents an adaptation of the Pauline letter form: epistolary greeting (1.1-2); thanksgiving (1.3-12); the body of the letter (1.13-5.11) portraying the new identity of the people of God (1.13-2.10), Christian conduct in the given structures of society (2.11-3.12), and responsible suffering in the face of society (3.13-5.11); epistolary conclusion (5.12-14).

[1 Peter 1]
Salutation

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,
To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood:

May grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Thanksgiving

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, 7 so that the genuineness of your faith — being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire — may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look!

Body of the letter; the new identity as the elect and holy people of God

Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed. Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. For "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls,"
but the word of the Lord endures forever."
That word is the good news that was announced to you.

[1 Peter 2]

1 Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy,
and all slander. 2 Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual
milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation — 3 if indeed you have
tasted that the Lord is good.

4 Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen
and precious in God's sight, and 5 like living stones, let yourselves be
built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual
sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in
scripture:
"See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious;
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."
7 To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not
believe,
"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner,"
8 and
"A stone that makes them stumble,
and a rock that makes them fall."
They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to
do.

9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's
own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him
who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
10 Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.
Christian existence and conduct in society

11 Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. 12 Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge.

13 For the LORD's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, 14 or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. 15 For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. 16 As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. 17 Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

18 Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh. 19 For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. 20 If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. 21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

22 "He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth."
23 When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

[1 Peter 3]

1 Wives, in the same way, accept the authority of your husbands, so that, even if some of them do not obey the word, they may be won over without a word by their wives' conduct, 2 when they see the
purity and reverence of your lives. 3 Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; 4 rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God's sight. 5 It was in this way long ago that the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by accepting the authority of their husbands. 6 Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham and called him lord. You have become her daughters as long as you do what is good and never let fears alarm you.

7 Husbands, in the same way, show consideration for your wives in your life together, paying honor to the woman as the weaker sex, since they too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life — so that nothing may hinder your prayers.

8 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 9 Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called — that you might inherit a blessing. 10 For "Those who desire life
    and desire to see good days,
    let them keep their tongues from evil
    and their lips from speaking deceit;
11 let them turn away from evil and do good;
    let them seek peace and pursue it.
12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
    and his ears are open to their prayer.
    But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

Responsible suffering in the face of hostility; suffering for doing right; Christological grounding

13 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? 14 But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; 16 yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience
clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, 19 in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, 20 who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. 21 And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you — not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

[1 Peter 4]
Application to the Christian life

1 Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention (for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin), 2 so as to live for the rest of your earthly life no longer by human desires but by the will of God. 3 You have already spent enough time in doing what the Gentiles like to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness, revels, carousing, and lawless idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you no longer join them in the same excesses of dissipation, and so they blaspheme. 5 But they will have to give an accounting to him who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. 6 For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed even to the dead, so that, though they had been judged in the flesh as everyone is judged, they might live in the spirit as God does.

Eschatological exhortation

7 The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. 8 Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Be hospitable to one another without complaining. 10 Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift
1 Peter 5:11-17

Suffering in joy and hope

12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. 16 Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name. 17 For the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And "If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinners?"

19 Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good.

1 Peter 5
Concluding exhortation

1 Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you 2 to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it — not for sordid gain but eagerly. 3 Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. 5 In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for
"God opposes the proud,  
but gives grace to the humble."

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. 8 Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. 10 And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. 11 To him be the power forever and ever. Amen.

Conclusion of the letter

12 Through Silvanus, whom I consider a faithful brother, I have written this short letter to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it. 13 Your sister church in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings; and so does my son Mark. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.
Introduction

The Second Letter of Peter follows the typical form of a letter, except that it lacks the customary final greeting. It also shares the characteristics of a testament (especially in 1.12-14), the final advice and warnings of a patriarch before his death (compare Paul's final address to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20.25-35). This combination of forms has resulted in the modification of each. Testaments are usually presented as a third-person report of the last spoken words of a patriarch to his sons before his death. Second Peter, however, is a first-person, written delivery of the last words of Peter to all who are of like faith (1.1). The writer makes use of a rich cultural heritage, including Hellenistic philosophical speculation, Jewish exegetical and apocalyptic traditions, the Hebrew Bible, traditions about Jesus, the Letter of Jude, and a collection of Paul's letters. The Greek style of 2 Peter is an example of the popular Greek rhetorical style of that age, characterized by grandiose, elaborate language.

There is little historical or literary evidence to connect the author of this letter to either Simon Peter or to the author of 1 Peter. The author wrote in the name of Peter, not to transmit a particular form of Petrine tradition, but to convey the common apostolic tradition of the church. Peter is chosen because of his reputation and his closeness to Jesus. Such pseudepigraphical attribution is frequent in the Bible and in other ancient literatures. The writer takes pains to appeal to the common apostolic teaching (3.2), explicitly including Paul (3.15-16). The letter was probably written from Rome around the end of the first century CE or the beginning of the second.
Second Peter is characterized by an apocalyptic vision of this world as corrupt because of lust (1.4) and bound for destruction. It urges the reader to escape by means of the knowledge of Christ and of God and by earnest moral striving that is grounded in the promises and gifts of God. The goal is to participate in the divine nature and to enter the eternal kingdom (1.11).

After a brief greeting, the letter opens with an ethical exhortation to pursue a chain of virtues based on the all-sufficient promises and gifts of God and achieved through knowledge and remembering (1.1-11). Three statements follow that establish the solemnity of the exhortation. The letter represents Peter's final "testament" (1.12-15); the heavenly voice guarantees the power and coming of Jesus (1.16-18); and the scripture is certain (1.19-21). Chapter 2 (much of which is adapted from Jude) is a warning against false teachers who want to exploit the unstable for the sake of greed and licentiousness. Their final destruction is as sure as is the final salvation of the godly. Those who are enticed by their empty promise of freedom are likewise doomed. Chapter 3 returns to the admonitions of chapter 1 and warns of the certainty of judgment. Just as the heaven and earth in Noah's time were destroyed through water, so the present heavens and earth will be destroyed through fire. Finally, there will be "new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home" (3.13). Those who wait for these things should take Paul's advice and use the time that remains to repent. They should abstain from the defilement of the world, avoid being led astray by the error of the lawless, and grow in grace and knowledge.
Salutation

1 Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have received a faith as precious as ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

2 May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Opening exhortation

3 His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature. 5 For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, 7 and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. 8 For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For anyone who lacks these things is nearsighted and blind, and is forgetful of the cleansing of past sins. 10 Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to confirm your call and election, for if you do this, you will never stumble. 11 For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

Three solemn appeals

12 Therefore I intend to keep on reminding you of these things, though you know them already and are established in the truth that has come to you. 13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to refresh your memory, 14 since I know that my death will come soon, as indeed our
Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. 15 And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

16 For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we had been eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father when that voice was conveyed to him by the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, my Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." 18 We ourselves heard this voice come from heaven, while we were with him on the holy mountain.

19 So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. 20 First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

[2 Peter 2]
Warnings against false teachings

1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive opinions. They will even deny the Master who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves. 2 Even so, many will follow their licentious ways, and because of these teachers the way of truth will be maligned. 3 And in their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. Their condemnation, pronounced against them long ago, has not been idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

4 For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of deepest darkness to be kept until the judgment; 5 and if he did not spare the ancient world, even though he saved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood on a world of the ungodly; 6 and if by turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them to extinction and made them an example of what is coming to
the ungodly; 7 and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man greatly distressed by the licentiousness of the lawless 8 (for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by their lawless deeds that he saw and heard), 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment 10 — especially those who indulge their flesh in depraved lust, and who despise authority.

Bold and willful, they are not afraid to slander the glorious ones, 11 whereas angels, though greater in might and power, do not bring against them a slanderous judgment from the Lord. 12 These people, however, are like irrational animals, mere creatures of instinct, born to be caught and killed. They slander what they do not understand, and when those creatures are destroyed, they also will be destroyed, 13 suffering the penalty for doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their dissipation while they feast with you. 14 They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children! 15 They have left the straight road and have gone astray, following the road of Balaam son of Bosor, who loved the wages of doing wrong, 16 but was rebuked for his own transgression; a speechless donkey spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

17 These are waterless springs and mists driven by a storm; for them the deepest darkness has been reserved. 18 For they speak bombastic nonsense, and with licentious desires of the flesh they entice people who have just escaped from those who live in error. 19 They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption; for people are slaves to whatever masters them. 20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overpowered, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment that was passed on to them. 22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb,
"The dog turns back to its own vomit,"
and,
"The sow is washed only to wallow in the mud."

[2 Peter 3]
A defense of the expectation of the coming of Christ

1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you; in them I am trying to arouse your sincere intention by reminding you that you should remember the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken through your apostles. 3 First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since our ancestors died, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!" 5 They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water, 6 through which the world of that time was deluged with water and perished. 7 But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the godless.

8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

11 Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, 12 waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? 13 But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.
Final exhortation and doxology

14 Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; 15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, 16 speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures. 17 You therefore, beloved, since you are forewarned, beware that you are not carried away with the error of the lawless and lose your own stability. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.
Introduction

Though it lacks the formal features of an ancient letter — such as the opening greeting, designation of recipients and sender, reference to local persons, sender's plans, and concluding greeting (see 2 and 3 John) — 1 John presents itself as an authoritative, written communication between the sender and its audience (1.4; 2.1, 7-8, 12-14, 21, 26). The opening (1.1-4) echoes the prologue of the Fourth Gospel (Jn 1.1-18), including the testimony of a communal "we" to its belief in Jesus Christ (1.1; Jn 1.14). Where the Gospel emphasized the presence of the eternal Word of God in Jesus, the epistle focuses on the physical reality of the word of life.

The "we" of a group of authorized teachers provides a formal backdrop for the individual who writes these instructions to the community. In the rest of the letter, the author uses "we" to indicate the common faith that he shares with the readers (e.g., 3.23-24). First John is the work of a single teacher, writing in the Johannine tradition. The opening "we" suggests that he belongs to a school of such teachers.

By the end of the second century, the author of 1 John had been identified with John, the evangelist (Eusebius, Historia ecclesiastica iii.39.17; Muratorian Canon, lines 26-31; Irenaeus, Adversus Haereses 3.16.5). Eventually, the Elder, author of 2 and 3 John, was also identified with John, the evangelist. Both theology and language, however, suggest that the Johannine letter were written ca. 100 CE by one or more teachers who are heirs to the evangelist's teaching, rather than by the evangelist himself.
First John often echoes phrases that remind readers of the Fourth Gospel. Yet such expressions also differ from the evangelist. Where the Gospel consistently speaks of Jesus as the light of the world (e.g., Jn 1.4-5, 7; 9.5; 12.46), in 1 John, "light" refers to God (1.5). "Walking in light" not only refers to belief in Jesus as revelation of God in the Gospel (Jn 8.12; 12.46) but to ethical conduct in life in 1 John 1.5-7. This ethical meaning for the image occurs in Jewish and other early Christian texts; 1 John often seems closer to those materials than to the Gospel's perspective that Jesus is the unique revelation of God. In the Gospel, belief in Jesus' relationship to the Father determines an individual's salvation (e.g., Jn 3.35-36). The hostile confrontation with Jews over the Christian claims for Jesus, which dominates the ministry of Jesus in the Gospel (for instance, Jn 8.13-59), never appears in 1 John. Interpreters who conclude that 1 John reflects an earlier form of the Johannine tradition therefore have to account for the general lack of Jewish concerns in 1 John. In fact, only unbelieving pagans (1 Jn 5.21) and dissident Christians who have broken communion with the Johannine churches (2.18-21) threaten the faith of 1 John's readers.

The writer accuses the dissidents of denying that Jesus is the messiah, that is, dying the Father and Son (2.22-23). Early Christian sayings warn that those who deny Jesus will be rejected in the judgment (cf. Mt 10.32-33 and its parallel at Lk 12.8-9). In the Gospel, denying the divinity of the Son is equivalent to denying the Father (e.g., Jn 5.20-23). Since the author of 1 John writes to ensure that its readers will not be deceived by the doctrine of opposing teachers (2.26-27), it would hardly have been the case that the secessionists denied the Christian belief that Jesus is the messiah or the Johannine insight that Jesus is identical with the Father. The link between christological belief and salvation is central to the Johannine tradition (5.1; Jn 1.12). The false teaching must have been one that introduced a subtle change into the tradition. First John 4.1-3 provides a clue: The opponents do not confess that Jesus has come "in the flesh." Combined with the opening stress on testimony to the physical reality of the word of life (1.1-4), this phrase suggests that their dispute concerned the humanity of Jesus.
Since 1 John does not argue against opposing views directly, interpreters often turn to other reports about dissident teachers in early Christianity. A close similarity to the views rejected in Christ 1 John appears in references to the Gnostic heretic, Cerinthus (ca. 100 CE). He argued that the divine Christ descended upon the righteous man, Jesus, at his baptism. This gift of the Spirit enabled Jesus to work miracles and reveal the unknown Father-God, who is the above Jewish creator. Since the divine cannot suffer, the Christ separated from Jesus prior to his death on the cross (see Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 1.26.1).

First John hints that the dissidents taught that Jesus Christ came in water only, not in water and blood (5.6). They apparently denied any saving significance to the death of Jesus on the cross. Though the clues in 1 John suggest that the opponents held some views in common with Cerinthus, the evidence is not decisive. There are no traces of the typical Gnostic teaching about a Father God beyond the creator or hostility to the God of Genesis in 1 John. Perhaps the secessionists derived their views of Jesus and the Spirit from the portrayal of Jesus in the Gospel of John.

Since the Gospel highlights the unity of believers with Jesus and through him with God (e.g., Jn 15.1-10; 17.6-19), schism threatened the promise of salvation at the heart of the Johannine Christianity. First John charges the dissidents with breaking the commandment of love by which Jesus and the Father dwell with the community (2.9-11; 20-21; 4.7-12; cf. Jn 14.15, 21; 15.9-10). The appearance of such schismatics fulfills the prediction that false prophets and messiahs will attempt to deceive God’s faithful (2.22; 4.1; cf. Mk 13.22). Because 1 John is so indirect in speaking about dissident teachers, one cannot determine whether all of the exhortation concerns them. Certainly questions concerning sin, judgment, mutual love among Christians, and confidence in prayer and in the redemptive death of Christ arose in other early Christian churches. Much of 1 John may reflect the ordinary style of preaching in the circle of Johannine teachers (for instance, 5.13-21). First John remains confident that the Spirit’s presence in the community will enable readers to recognize this work as an expression of the truth revealed in Jesus (2.27; 4.6, 13).
[1 John 1]
Introduction

1 We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life — 2 this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us — 3 we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

Holiness in the community

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; 7 but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

[1 John 2]
Christ, our advocate

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

3 Now by this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments. 4 Whoever says, "I have come to know him," but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist; 5 but whoever obeys his word, truly in this person the
love of God has reached perfection. By this we may be sure that we are in him: 6 whoever says, "I abide in him," ought to walk just as he walked.

The love commandment

7 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word that you have heard. 8 Yet I am writing you a new commandment that is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. 9 Whoever says, "I am in the light," while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness. 10 Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light, and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling. 11 But whoever hates another believer is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness.

Victory over evil

12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven on account of his name. 13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young people, because you have conquered the evil one. 14 I write to you, children, because you know the Father. I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young people, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; 16 for all that is in the world — the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches —
comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever.

Victory over false teaching

18 Children, it is the last hour! As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. From this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But by going out they made it plain that none of them belongs to us. 20 But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and all of you have knowledge. 21 I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and you know that no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; everyone who confesses the Son has the Father also. 24 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he has promised us, eternal life.

26 I write these things to you concerning those who would deceive you. 27 As for you, the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and so you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, abide in him.

28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he is revealed we may have confidence and not be put to shame before him at his coming.

God's children are holy

29 If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who does right has been born of him. [1 John 3] 1 See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did
not know him. 2 Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. 3 And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

4 Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. 8 Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. 9 Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God's seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God. 10 The children of God and the children of the devil are revealed in this way: all who do not do what is right are not from God, nor are those who do not love their brothers and sisters.

**Moral examples**

11 For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 12 We must not be like Cain who was from the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. 13 Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. 15 All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. 16 We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us — and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. 17 How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

**Love as confidence before God**

18 Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. 19 And by this we will know that we are from the truth and will
reassure our hearts before him 20 whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. 21 Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; 22 and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him.

23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us. 24 All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

[1 John 4]
Testing spirits

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. And this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming; and now it is already in the world. 4 Little children, you are from God, and have conquered them; for the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 5 They are from the world; therefore what they say is from the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and whoever is not from God does not listen to us. From this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

God's love as the basis of salvation

7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one
another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. 15 God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. 16 So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. 17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. 21 The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

[1 John 5]  
Concluding appeal to keep the true faith

1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. 3 For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, 4 for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. 5 Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth. 7 There are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree. 9 If we receive human testimony, the testimony of God is
greater; for this is the testimony of God that he has testified to his Son.  
10 Those who believe in the Son of God have the testimony in their hearts. Those who do not believe in God have made him a liar by not believing in the testimony that God has given concerning his Son. 11 And this is the testimony: God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

Epilogue. Sin and forgiveness in the community

14 And this is the boldness we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him. 16 If you see your brother or sister committing what is not a mortal sin, you will ask, and God will give life to such a one — to those whose sin is not mortal. There is sin that is mortal; I do not say that you should pray about that. 17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that is not mortal.

18 We know that those who are born of God do not sin, but the one who was born of God protects them, and the evil one does not touch them. 19 We know that we are God’s children, and that the whole world lies under the power of the evil one. 20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols.
Introduction

Second John follows the structural conventions of an ancient letter: designation of sender and recipient (v. 1a); greeting formula, somewhat expanded (vv. 1b-3); wish or thanksgiving for well-being of recipient (v. 4); body of letter vv. 5-11); concluding matters, travel plans (v. 12), and final greeting (v. 13). However, no concrete names, places, or details are specified. The expression "elect lady" (v. 1) may refer to one or more of the Johannine churches in Asia Minor. The author refers to himself as "the Elder," an expression which could indicate that he held the office of presbyter in a house church (cf. Acts 14.23; 20.17; 1 Pet 5.1; 1 Tim 5.17) or which may be a reminder of the respect due elders in the community (cf. 1 Pet 5.5; 1 Tim 5.2). Because the term is not used in 1 John, some scholars conclude that 2 John was composed by another person in the circle of the Johannine teachers. However, its genre did not require that 1 John refer to either sender or addressee. The similarity in language and situation makes it more likely that the same individual composed both letters.

Use of an allusion to the love command and teaching held from the beginning (vv. 5-6; cf. 1 John 2.24; 3.11; 5.3) to bolster warnings against dissident teachers (v. 7; 1 John 4.3) shows that 2 John refers to the opponents refuted in 1 John. The Elder asks the recipients to exclude dissidents from any hospitality. To aid them would be to share in their diabolical work (vv. 8-11). Perhaps a copy of 1 John accompanied these instructions.
[2 John]

Letter opening

1 The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth, and not only I but also all who know the truth, 2 because of the truth that abides in us and will be with us forever:

Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, in truth and love.

Letter body

4 I was overjoyed to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as we have been commanded by the Father. 5 But now, dear lady, I ask you, not as though I were writing you a new commandment, but one we have had from the beginning, let us love one another. 6 And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment just as you have heard it from the beginning — you must walk in it.

7 Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist! 8 Be on your guard, so that you do not lose what we have worked for, but may receive a full reward. 9 Everyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God; whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. 10 Do not receive into the house or welcome anyone who comes to you and does not bring this teaching; 11 for to welcome is to participate in the evil deeds of such a person.

Letter closing

12 Although I have much to write to you, I would rather not use paper and ink; instead I hope to come to you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

13 The children of your elect sister send you their greetings.
3 JOHN

Introduction

Third John has the form of a private letter from the Elder (see the Introduction to 2 John) to a certain Gaius, who is well known for showing hospitality to traveling missionaries (vv. 5-8). Because 3 John does not refer to the dissidents of 1 and 2 John, some interpreters hold that the Elder is not the same person who wrote those letters. However, the similarity of language in the conclusions of 2 John (vv. 12-13) and 3 John (vv. 13-15) makes it more likely that the same person is writing 3 John. Demetrius, whom the Elder recommends in v. 12, may have brought the letter to Gaius. The early Christian mission was dependent upon hospitality (Mt 10.40-42; Acts 16.14-15; Rom 16.1-2). However, the Elder is not writing to continue a relationship that is already well established. Verses 9-10 speak of a letter to a church in the region that was rejected. A certain Diotrephes not only refused hospitality to persons associated with the Elder, he even excluded other who did so from the church. Thus, 3 John appears to be seeking an alternate source of support in the region.

Has Diotrephes given the Elder a dose of the medicine prescribed in 2 John 8-11? Perhaps, though in that case one might suppose that the Elder would have distinguished his emissaries from dissident teachers. In the language of ancient diplomacy, refusing hospitality to someone's envoy implied rejecting the message he bears and the sender as well (cf. 1 Macc 14.21-23). The Gospel of John uses similar language about Jesus as God's emissary (John 13.20). Verses 9-10 indicate that the rift between Diotrephes and the Elder is serious, but provide no evidence about its cause.
[3 John 1]
Letter opening and health wish

1 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.

Letter body

2 Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul. 3 I was overjoyed when some of the friends arrived and testified to your faithfulness to the truth, namely how you walk in the truth. 4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

5 Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the friends, even though they are strangers to you; 6 they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on in a manner worthy of God; 7 for they began their journey for the sake of Christ, accepting no support from non-believers. 8 Therefore we ought to support such people, so that we may become co-workers with the truth.

9 I have written something to the church; but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. 10 So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing in spreading false charges against us. And not content with those charges, he refuses to welcome the friends, and even prevents those who want to do so and expels them from the church.

11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but imitate what is good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God. 12 Everyone has testified favorably about Demetrius, and so has the truth itself. We also testify for him, and you know that our testimony is true.
Letter closing

13 I have much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink; 14 instead I hope to see you soon, and we will talk together face to face.

15 Peace to you. The friends send you their greetings. Greet the friends there, each by name.
Introduction

Although the addressees of the Letter of Jude are rather vaguely defined (v. 1), the emergency identified as its occasion (vv. 3-4) and the concrete descriptions of the opponents indicate that it was a real letter to particular recipients. The purpose of the letter is to encourage the addressees "to contend for the faith" against those who "pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness" (vv. 3-4). The date of composition is uncertain, except that it must be earlier than 2 Peter, which uses Jude. The reference to "the words spoken by the apostles" (v. 17) may indicate a period in the church when the apostles could be spoken of as a unified group from the past. If so, this may point to a date late in the first century CE. Others have dated Jude as early as the 50s.

Jude is the brother of James (Mt 13.55; Mk 6.3), who was the Lord's brother (Gal 1.19) and leader of the Jerusalem church. Only this James was prominent enough to have been sufficient identification for his brother. Attributing the authorship of a writing to a major figure is well attested in the Bible and in other ancient literature.

The letter is organized by an exhortation to "contend for the faith" (v. 3) and a closing exhortation to keep oneself "in the love of God" (v. 21) and have "mercy" on other who are erring (vv. 22-23). Between these two exhortations, a series of biblical and nonbiblical stories and prophecies are interpreted to show the error and eventual doom of the writer's opponents. They are an interpretation of selected judgments from Genesis to Exodus (vv. 5-8) with a note on Michael the archangel (vv. 9-10), an interpretation of selected errors from Genesis to Numbers (vv. 11-13), an application of the prophecy of 1 Enoch 1.9 to the opponents (vv. 14-16), and an application of apostolic prophecy (vv. 17-19). In each case the transition from citation to interpretation is marked by the word "these" as subject of the sentence: "these dreamers" (v.
8); "these people" (v. 10); "these are..." (vv. 12, 16). The letter closes with an elaborate and beautiful doxology (vv. 24-25).

[Jude 1]

Salutation

1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James,
To those who are called, who are beloved in God the Father and kept safe for Jesus Christ:

2 May mercy, peace, and love be yours in abundance.

Occasion

3 Beloved, while eagerly preparing to write to you about the salvation we share, I find it necessary to write and appeal to you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. 4 For certain intruders have stolen in among you, people who long ago were designated for this condemnation as ungodly, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Three examples of judgment

5 Now I desire to remind you, though you are fully informed, that the Lord, who once for all saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. 6 And the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great day. 7 Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.
A further example of the impropriety of slander; three examples of error

8 Yet in the same way these dreamers also defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander the glorious ones. 9 But when the archangel Michael contended with the devil and disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare to bring a condemnation of slander against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10 But these people slander whatever they do not understand, and they are destroyed by those things that, like irrational animals, they know by instinct. 11 Woe to them! For they go the way of Cain, and abandon themselves to Balaam's error for the sake of gain, and perish in Korah's rebellion. 12 These are blemishes on your love-feasts, while they feast with you without fear, feeding themselves. They are waterless clouds carried along by the winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, uprooted; 13 wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the deepest darkness has been reserved forever.

A prophecy of judgment

14 It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, "See, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones, 15 to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him." 16 These are grumblers and malcontents; they indulge their own lusts; they are bombastic in speech, flattering people to their own advantage.

An apostolic prophecy; exhortations

17 But you, beloved, must remember the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; 18 for they said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, indulging their own ungodly lusts." 19 It is these worldly people, devoid of the Spirit, who are causing divisions. 20 But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; 21 keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy
of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on some who are wavering; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; and have mercy on still others with fear, hating even the tunic defiled by their bodies.

Doxology

24 Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing, 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.
Introduction

The book of Revelation, also known as the Apocalypse (from the Greek word meaning "disclosure," "unveiling," or "revelation") brings the canon of the New Testament to a close, appropriately so in view of its vivid visions of the consummation of God's plan of judgment and salvation. While the book presents itself as a work of prophecy (1.3; 22.10), it has given its name to a literary genre, the "apocalypse," found in a range of Jewish and Christian writings that first appeared about 250 BCE. Like other apocalyptic literature, the book of Revelation presents God's revelation to a human recipient. Unlike other apocalypses, which are pseudonymous, with their authors writing in the name of some revered figure from antiquity, the author of this book of Revelation identifies himself by his own name as John (1.1, 4, 9; 22.8). Although some ancient authorities (e.g., Justin, Dialogue with Trypho 81.4) have suggested that this is the apostle John, the son of Zebedee (see Mk 3.17), the internal evidence of the book itself is inconclusive. The author's acquaintance with the Jerusalem Temple and the rites conducted there, the depth of his knowledge of the Hebrew Bible (of the 404 verses in Revelation, some 275 include one or more allusions to passages in the Hebrew Bible, or to its Greek version, the Septuagint), as well as his adoption of a literary genre that was familiar in Palestinian Judaism, combine to suggest that John might have been a Palestinian Jewish Christian who fled to the Diaspora as a consequence of the First Jewish Revolt against the Romans (66-73 CE). His self-identification to the seven churches as "your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance" (1.9) suggests that he was well known to his audience, probably because he exercised a prophetic ministry among them (see 22.9). But he mentions the twelve apostles as figures from the past (21.14) and does not refer to himself as one of them. The traditional
identification of the John of the book of Revelation with the apostle of the same name is thus questionable.

While it is likely that the book of Revelation draws on traditional material and on source were set in writing before the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE (e.g., chs 11 and 12), it is probable that the book was composed toward the end of the reign of the emperor Domitian (81-96 CE). The book is addressed to "the seven churches that are in Asia" (1.4), Christian communities in the Roman pro-consular province of Asia, located in the western portion of present-day Turkey. The book demonstrates its author's familiarity with the specific situation of each of the seven churches, beginning with Ephesus, the city that was the administrative capital of the province. The seven cities were complex and diverse in economic, social, political, and religious terms. Whether or not Christians faced organized and widespread persecutions sanctioned by Roman imperial authorities at the time the book was written, Christians in Asia were suffering serious oppression, facing the danger of being "slaughtered for the word of God and the testimony they had given" (6.9). One such martyr is Antipas, identified by name in the message to the church at Pergamum (2.13). John himself endured exile on the island of Patmos "because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus" (1.9), and he reports that his visions took place there. A variety of voices and viewpoints competed for the attention of the late first-century Christians to whom the book of Revelation was originally addressed. John exhorts them to stand firm in their convictions, to resist "with patient endurance" (2.2, 19; 3.10) and at any cost the overwhelming pressures to yield to accommodation and compromise. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE gave John ample cause to identify Rome as Babylon, recalling the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. The breadth and depth of Rome's political and economic power found expression in the widespread worship of the emperor in the book of province of Asia, with temples to the emperor and to Rome personified as the goddess Roma. The book of Revelation takes sides in a battle over sovereignty, where the Roman emperor competes with God and Christ in a contest for the allegiance of the faithful. Warning that those who worship the emperor, symbolized by "the beast" (13.1-10), will suffer ultimate defeat, the book urges believers to "hold fast to the faith of Jesus"
and to share in the paradoxical victory of his death and resurrection.

The book of Revelation is a work of extremes, ranging from soaring heights of hymnody inspired by Hebrew psalms and canticles to the gruesome language of plagues, warfare, and bloodshed. It uses the dualistic language characteristic of the apocalyptic genre to paint vivid portraits of the opposing sides in the eschatological conflict that will culminate in the victory of God and the final defeat of all evil. With its symbolic numbers and colors, animals, and angelic and demonic beings, and replete with echoes and images drawn from the literature of the ancient Near East, the Hebrew Bible, Greece, and Rome, the book of Revelation is so notoriously complex that the church father Jerome (345-420 CE) was led to remark that it contains as many mysteries as it contains words. Origen (185-254 CE) exclaimed, "Who can read the revelations granted to John without being amazed at the hidden depth of the ineffable mysteries, a depth apparent even to the person who does not understand what the text says?" (On First Principles 4.2.4). Many centuries later, the modern writer D.H. Lawrence wrote, "When we read Revelation, we feel at once there are meaning behind meanings.' The symbolic visions of the book are by no means self-explanatory, and even John reports the need for the intervention of an angelic mediator to explain the meaning of the mystery disclosed to him (17.7). This characteristic, common in other works of the same genre, serves to emphasize that there are transcendent levels of meaning that must be discerned. The significance of events on earth is to be sought above and beyond what is immediately apparent, and it is ultimately to God that believers must turn to receive the meaning and guidance that strengthen their perseverance in the face of adversity. Over the centuries, the book of Revelation has been considered from a wide variety of interpretive strategies and approaches, ranging from literal readings of the book as predictive prophecy to readings that recognize in its utopian language the promise of hope in the midst of contemporary situations of suffering and oppression.

Although the structure of the book of Revelation is widely debated among scholars, there is general agreement that it involves a series of parallel, interconnected, and yet ever progressing sections. It begins
with a prologue (1.1-3), an epistolary salutation (1.4-8) and an inaugural vision (1.9-20), which are followed by messages to each of the seven churches (2.1-3.22). Next (4.1-5.14) we find a vision of God enthroned and of Jesus depicted as a Lamb, who receives the seven sealed scrolls from the hand of God. A series of sevenfold visions commences at 6.1, beginning with the opening of each of the seven seals (6.1-8.5), followed by the sounding of each of the seven trumpets (8.6-11.19). The sounding of the seventh trumpet is followed by the vision of the woman, the child, and the dragon (12.1-17), the vision of the two beasts (13.1-18), and a threefold vision of the victory and vindication of the faithful (14.1-20). These are followed by a final sevenfold series, the outpouring of the bowls of divine wrath (16.1-21). 17.1-18.24 presents the vision of the fall of Babylon, followed by the great doxology of 19.1-10 that also looks forward to the eschatological victory (19.11-21), the defeat of Satan (20.1-10), the last judgment (20.11-15), and the vision of the new Jerusalem (21.1-22.5). The book concludes with an epilogue (22.6-21).

[Revelation 1]
The prologue

1 The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place; he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of the prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it; for the time is near.

Epistolary salutation

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia:
Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

7 Look! He is coming with the clouds;
   every eye will see him,
   even those who pierced him;
   and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail.
So it is to be. Amen.

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Inaugural vision and commission

9 I, John, your brother who share with you in Jesus the persecution and the kingdom and the patient endurance, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 I was in the spirit on the LORD’s day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet 11 saying, "Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamum, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

12 Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. 14 His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, 15 his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force.
17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he placed his right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades. 19 Now write what you have seen, what is, and what is to take place after this. 20 As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

[Revelation 2]
The messages to the seven churches; the first message to Ephesus

1 "To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands:

2 "I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance. I know that you cannot tolerate evildoers; you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them to be false. 3 I also know that you are enduring patiently and bearing up for the sake of my name, and that you have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember then from what you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. 6 Yet this is to your credit: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God.

The second message to Smyrna

8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of the first and the last, who was dead and came to life:

9 "I know your affliction and your poverty, even though you are rich. I know the slander on the part of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Do not fear what you are
about to suffer. Beware, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have affliction. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. 11 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Whoever conquers will not be harmed by the second death.

The third message to Pergamum

12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword:

13 "I know where you are living, where Satan's throne is. Yet you are holding fast to my name, and you did not deny your faith in me even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan lives. 14 But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel, so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols and practice fornication. 15 So you also have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.

The fourth message to Thyatira

18 "And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze:

19 "I know your works — your love, faith, service, and patient endurance. I know that your last works are greater than the first. 20 But I have this against you: you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet and is teaching and beguiling my servants to practice fornication and to eat food sacrificed to idols. 21 I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her fornication. 22 Beware, I am
throwing her on a bed, and those who commit adultery with her I am throwing into great distress, unless they repent of her doings; 23 and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve. 24 But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call 'the deep things of Satan,' to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden; 25 only hold fast to what you have until I come. 26 To everyone who conquers and continues to do my works to the end,

I will give authority over the nations;
27 to rule them with an iron rod,

as when clay pots are shattered —
28 even as I also received authority from my Father. To the one who conquers I will also give the morning star. 29 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

[Revelation 3]
The fifth message to Sardis

1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars:

"I know your works; you have a name of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God. 3 Remember then what you received and heard; obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. 4 Yet you have still a few persons in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. 5 If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white robes, and I will not blot your name out of the book of life; I will confess your name before my Father and before his angels. 6 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.
The sixth message to Philadelphia

7 "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:
   These are the words of the holy one, the true one,
   who has the key of David,
   who opens and no one will shut,
   who shuts and no one opens:

8 "I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which
    no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet
    you have kept my word and have not denied my name. 9 I will make
    those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are
    not, but are lying — I will make them come and bow down before your
    feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. 10 Because you have
    kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of
    trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the
    earth. 11 I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one
    may seize your crown. 12 If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the
    temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the
    name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new
    Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own
    new name. 13 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is
    saying to the churches.

The seventh message to Laodicea

14 "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the
    Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin of God's creation:

15 "I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you
    were either cold or hot. 16 So, because you are lukewarm, and neither
    cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 For you say, 'I
    am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.' You do not realize that
    you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. 18 Therefore I
    counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be
    rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your
    nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you
    may see. 19 I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest,
therefore, and repent. 20 Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. 21 To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22 Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches."

[Revelation 4]
Vision of God enthroned and of the Lamb

1 After this I looked, and there in heaven a door stood open! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." 2 At once I was in the spirit, and there in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! 3 And the one seated there looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald. 4 Around the throne are twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones are twenty-four elders, dressed in white robes, with golden crowns on their heads. 5 Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; 6 and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal.

Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are four living creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: 7 the first living creature like a lion, the second living creature like an ox, the third living creature with a face like a human face, and the fourth living creature like a flying eagle. 8 And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing,

"Holy, holy, holy,
the Lord God the Almighty,
who was and is and is to come."

9 And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, 10 the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne
and worship the one who lives forever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing,
11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God,
    to receive glory and honor and power,
    for you created all things,
    and by your will they existed and were created."

[Revelation 5]

1 Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; 2 and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" 3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. 4 And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. 5 Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

6 Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. 8 When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 They sing a new song:
    "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals,
    for you were slaughtered and by your blood you
    ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language
    and people and nation;
10 you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God,
    and they will reign on earth."

11 Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, 12 singing with full voice,
"Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

14 And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshiped.

[Revelation 6]
The opening of the first six seals; four seals of destruction

1 Then I saw the Lamb open one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures call out, as with a voice of thunder, "Come!" 2 I looked, and there was a white horse! Its rider had a bow; a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering and to conquer.

3 When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature call out, "Come!" 4 And out came another horse, bright red; its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people would slaughter one another; and he was given a great sword.

5 When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature call out, "Come!" I looked, and there was a black horse! Its rider held a pair of scales in his hand, 6 and I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a day's pay, and three quarts of barley for a day's pay, but do not damage the olive oil and the wine!"

7 When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature call out, "Come!" 8 I looked and there was a pale green horse! Its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed with him; they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, famine, and pestilence, and by the wild animals of the earth.
Three seals of judgment; the fifth seal

9 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered for the word of God and for the testimony they had given; 10 they cried out with a loud voice, “Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long will it be before you judge and avenge our blood on the inhabitants of the earth?” 11 They were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number would be complete both of their fellow servants and of their brothers and sisters, who were soon to be killed as they themselves had been killed.

The opening of the sixth seal

12 When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and there came a great earthquake; the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, 13 and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree drops its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. 14 The sky vanished like a scroll rolling itself up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. 15 Then the kings of the earth and the magnates and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, 16 calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

[Revelation 7]
An interlude

1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth so that no wind could blow on earth or sea or against any tree. 2 I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God, and he called with a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to damage earth and sea, 3 saying, "Do not damage the earth or the sea or the trees, until we have marked the servants of our God with a seal on their foreheads."
4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed, one hundred forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the people of Israel:

5 From the tribe of Judah twelve thousand sealed, from the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand, from the tribe of Gad twelve thousand,

6 from the tribe of Asher twelve thousand, from the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand, from the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand,

7 from the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand, from the tribe of Levi twelve thousand, from the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand,

8 from the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand, from the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand, from the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand sealed.

9 After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. 10 They cried out in a loud voice, saying,

"Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

11 And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 singing,

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

13 Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?" 14 I said to him, "Sir, you are the one that knows." Then he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."
15 For this reason they are before the throne of God,  
and worship him day and night within his temple,  
and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them.
16 They will hunger no more, and thirst no more;  
the sun will not strike them,  
nor any scorching heat;  
17 for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,  
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,  
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

[Revelation 8]  
The seventh seal

1 When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.

3 Another angel with a golden censer came and stood at the altar; he was given a great quantity of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that is before the throne. 4 And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. 5 Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth; and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

The first six trumpets; four trumpets of destruction

6 Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets made ready to blow them.

7 The first angel blew his trumpet, and there came hail and fire, mixed with blood, and they were hurled to the earth; and a third of the earth was burned up, and a third of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.
8 The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain, burning with fire, was thrown into the sea. 9 A third of the sea became blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

10 The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star fell from heaven, blazing like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many died from the water, because it was made bitter.

12 The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, and a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of their light was darkened; a third of the day was kept from shining, and likewise the night.

13 Then I looked, and I heard an eagle crying with a loud voice as it flew in midheaven, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, at the blasts of the other trumpets that the three angels are about to blow!"

[Revelation 9]
Three trumpets of woe; the plague of monstrous locusts

1 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from heaven to earth, and he was given the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit; 2 he opened the shaft of the bottomless pit, and from the shaft rose smoke like the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air were darkened with the smoke from the shaft. 3 Then from the smoke came locusts on the earth, and they were given authority like the authority of scorpions of the earth. 4 They were told not to damage the grass of the earth or any green growth or any tree, but only those people who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 They were allowed to torture them for five months, but not to kill them, and their torture was like the torture of a scorpion when it stings someone. 6 And in those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will flee from them.
7 In appearance the locusts were like horses equipped for battle. On their heads were what looked like crowns of gold; their faces were like human faces, 8 their hair like women's hair, and their teeth like lions' teeth; 9 they had scales like iron breastplates, and the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots with horses rushing into battle. 10 They have tails like scorpions, with stingers, and in their tails is their power to harm people for five months. 11 They have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit; his name in Hebrew is Abaddon, and in Greek he is called Apollyon.

12 The first woe has passed. There are still two woes to come.

The plague of monstrous cavalry

13 Then the sixth angel blew his trumpet, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, 14 saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." 15 So the four angels were released, who had been held ready for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, to kill a third of humankind. 16 The number of the troops of cavalry was two hundred million; I heard their number. 17 And this was how I saw the horses in my vision: the riders wore breastplates the color of fire and of sapphire and of sulfur; the heads of the horses were like lions' heads, and fire and smoke and sulfur came out of their mouths. 18 By these three plagues a third of humankind was killed, by the fire and smoke and sulfur coming out of their mouths. 19 For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in their tails; their tails are like serpents, having heads; and with them they inflict harm.

20 The rest of humankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands or give up worshiping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk. 21 And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their fornication or their thefts.
[Revelation 10]  
An interlude; the commission renewed

1 And I saw another mighty angel coming down from heaven, wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow over his head; his face was like the sun, and his legs like pillars of fire. 2 He held a little scroll open in his hand. Setting his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land, 3 he gave a great shout, like a lion roaring. And when he shouted, the seven thunders sounded. 4 And when the seven thunders had sounded, I was about to write, but I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up what the seven thunders have said, and do not write it down." 5 Then the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and the land raised his right hand to heaven

6 and swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what is in it: "There will be no more delay, 7 but in the days when the seventh angel is to blow his trumpet, the mystery of God will be fulfilled, as he announced to his servants the prophets."

8 Then the voice that I had heard from heaven spoke to me again, saying, "Go, take the scroll that is open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and on the land." 9 So I went to the angel and told him to give me the little scroll; and he said to me, "Take it, and eat; it will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth." 10 So I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it; it was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.

11 Then they said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples and nations and languages and kings."

[Revelation 11]  
The measuring of the temple and the two witnesses

1 Then I was given a measuring rod like a staff, and I was told, "Come and measure the temple of God and the altar and those who worship there, 2 but do not measure the court outside the temple; leave that out, for it is given over to the nations, and they will trample over the
holy city for forty-two months. 3 And I will grant my two witnesses authority to prophesy for one thousand two hundred sixty days, wearing sackcloth."

4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, fire pours from their mouth and consumes their foes; anyone who wants to harm them must be killed in this manner. 6 They have authority to shut the sky, so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every kind of plague, as often as they desire.

7 When they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the bottomless pit will make war on them and conquer them and kill them, 8 and their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city that is prophetically called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. 9 For three and a half days members of the peoples and tribes and languages and nations will gaze at their dead bodies and refuse to let them be placed in a tomb; 10 and the inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and celebrate and exchange presents, because these two prophets had been a torment to the inhabitants of the earth.

11 But after the three and a half days, the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and those who saw them were terrified. 12 Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here!" And they went up to heaven in a cloud while their enemies watched them. 13 At that moment there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

The seventh trumpet

14 The second woe has passed. The third woe is coming very soon.

15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying,
"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever."

16 Then the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, 17 singing, "We give you thanks, Lord God Almighty, who are and who were, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.

18 The nations raged, but your wrath has come, and the time for judging the dead, for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints and all who fear your name, both small and great, and for destroying those who destroy the earth."

19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple; and there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake, and heavy hail.

[Revelation 12]
The vision of the woman, the child, and the dragon

1 A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. 2 She was pregnant and was crying out in birth pangs, in the agony of giving birth. 3 Then another portent appeared in heaven: a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4 His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. Then the dragon stood before the woman who was about to bear a child, so that he might devour her child as soon as it was born. 5 And she gave birth to a son, a male child, who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron. But her child was snatched away and taken to God and to his throne; 6 and the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, so that there she can be nourished for one thousand two hundred sixty days.
7 And war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, 8 but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. 9 The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world — he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming,
   "Now have come the salvation and the power
   and the kingdom of our God
   and the authority of his Messiah,
   for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down,
   who accuses them day and night before our God.
11 But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb
   and by the word of their testimony,
   for they did not cling to life even in the face of death.
12 Rejoice then, you heavens
   and those who dwell in them!
   But woe to the earth and the sea,
   for the devil has come down to you
   with great wrath,
   because he knows that his time is short!"

13 So when the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, so that she could fly from the serpent into the wilderness, to her place where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time. 15 Then from his mouth the serpent poured water like a river after the woman, to sweep her away with the flood. 16 But the earth came to the help of the woman; it opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon had poured from his mouth. 17 Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her children, those who keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus.
The two beasts

18 Then the dragon took his stand on the sand of the seashore. [Revelation 13] 1 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads; and on its horns were ten diadems, and on its heads were blasphemous names. 2 And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And the dragon gave it his power and his throne and great authority. 3 One of its heads seemed to have received a death-blow, but its mortal wound had been healed. In amazement the whole earth followed the beast. 4 They worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

5 The beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. 6 It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven. 7 Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. It was given authority over every tribe and people and language and nation, 8 and all the inhabitants of the earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slaughtered.

9 Let anyone who has an ear listen: 10 If you are to be taken captive, into captivity you go; if you kill with the sword, with the sword you must be killed. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

11 Then I saw another beast that rose out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. 12 It exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and it makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound had been healed. 13 It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in the sight of all; 14 and by the signs that it is allowed to perform on behalf of the beast, it deceives the inhabitants of earth,
telling them to make an image for the beast that had been wounded by the sword and yet lived; 15 and it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast so that the image of the beast could even speak and cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 Also it causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, 17 so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. 18 This calls for wisdom: let anyone with understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a person. Its number is six hundred sixty-six.

[Revelation 14]
A series of three visions

1 Then I looked, and there was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion! And with him were one hundred forty-four thousand who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven like the sound of many waters and like the sound of loud thunder; the voice I heard was like the sound of harpists playing on their harps, 3 and they sing a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and before the elders. No one could learn that song except the one hundred forty-four thousand who have been redeemed from the earth. 4 It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are virgins; these follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They have been redeemed from humankind as first fruits for God and the Lamb, 5 and in their mouth no lie was found; they are blameless.

6 Then I saw another angel flying in midheaven, with an eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth — to every nation and tribe and language and people. 7 He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come; and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of water."

8 Then another angel, a second, followed, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."
9 Then another angel, a third, followed them, crying with a loud voice, "Those who worship the beast and its image, and receive a mark on their foreheads or on their hands, 10 they will also drink the wine of God's wrath, poured unmixed into the cup of his anger, and they will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever. There is no rest day or night for those who worship the beast and its image and for anyone who receives the mark of its name."

12 Here is a call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and hold fast to the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who from now on die in the Lord." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them."

14 Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like the Son of Man, with a golden crown on his head, and a sharp sickle in his hand! 15 Another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to the one who sat on the cloud, "Use your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." 16 So the one who sat on the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was reaped.

17 Then another angel came out of the temple in heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 18 Then another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over fire, and he called with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, "Use your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." 19 So the angel swung his sickle over the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and he threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God. 20 And the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as a horse's bridle, for a distance of about two hundred miles.
[Revelation 15]
The seven bowls of the wrath of God; the preparation for judgment

1 Then I saw another portent in heaven, great and amazing: seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended.

2 And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name, standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. 3 And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:
   "Great and amazing are your deeds,
   Lord God the Almighty!
   Just and true are your ways,
   King of the nations!
4 Lord, who will not fear
   and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy.
   All nations will come
   and worship before you,
for your judgments have been revealed."

5 After this I looked, and the temple of the tent of witness in heaven was opened, 6 and out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven plagues, robed in pure bright linen, with golden sashes across their chests. 7 Then one of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God, who lives forever and ever; 8 and the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, and no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were ended.

[Revelation 16]
The pouring of the bowls

1 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple telling the seven angels, "Go and pour out on the earth the seven bowls of the wrath of God."
2 So the first angel went and poured his bowl on the earth, and a foul and painful sore came on those who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped its image.

3 The second angel poured his bowl into the sea, and it became like the blood of a corpse, and every living thing in the sea died.

4 The third angel poured his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters say,
   "You are just, O Holy One, who are and were, for you have judged these things;
6 because they shed the blood of saints and prophets, you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!"
7 And I heard the altar respond,
   "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, your judgments are true and just!"

8 The fourth angel poured his bowl on the sun, and it was allowed to scorch people with fire; 9 they were scorched by the fierce heat, but they cursed the name of God, who had authority over these plagues, and they did not repent and give him glory.

10 The fifth angel poured his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness; people gnawed their tongues in agony, 11 and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and sores, and they did not repent of their deeds.

12 The sixth angel poured his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up in order to prepare the way for the kings from the east. 13 And I saw three foul spirits like frogs coming from the mouth of the dragon, from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet. 14 These are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. 15 ("See, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and is clothed, not going
about naked and exposed to shame." 16 And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Harmagedon.

17 The seventh angel poured his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 And there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a violent earthquake, such as had not occurred since people were upon the earth, so violent was that earthquake. 19 The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. God remembered great Babylon and gave her the wine-cup of the fury of his wrath. 20 And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found; 21 and huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, dropped from heaven on people, until they cursed God for the plague of the hail, so fearful was that plague.

[Revelation 17]
The fall of Babylon, which is Rome; the vision of the woman

1 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great whore who is seated on many waters, 2 with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and with the wine of whose fornication the inhabitants of the earth have become drunk." 3 So he carried me away in the spirit into a wilderness, and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was full of blasphemous names, and it had seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication; 5 and on her forehead was written a name, a mystery: "Babylon the great, mother of whose and of earth's abominations." 6 And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus.

When I saw her, I was greatly amazed. 7 But the angel said to me, "Why are you so amazed? I will tell you the mystery of the woman, and of the beast with seven heads and ten horns that carries her. 8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to ascend from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the inhabitants of the earth,
whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will be amazed when they see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

9 "This calls for a mind that has wisdom: the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; also, they are seven kings, 10 of whom five have fallen, one is living, and the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain only a little while. 11 As for the beast that was and is not, it is an eighth but it belongs to the seven, and it goes to destruction. 12 And the ten horns that you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they are to receive authority as kings for one hour, together with the beast. 13 These are united in yielding their power and authority to the beast; 14 they will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful."

15 And he said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the whore is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. 16 And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the whore; they will make her desolate and naked; they will devour her flesh and burn her up with fire. 17 For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled. 18 The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

[Revelation 18]
Dirge over the fallen city

1 After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority; and the earth was made bright with his splendor. 2 He called out with a mighty voice, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! It has become a dwelling place of demons, a haunt of every foul spirit, a haunt of every foul bird, a haunt of every foul and hateful beast."
3 For all the nations have drunk
  of the wine of the wrath of her fornication,
  and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her,
  and the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power
  of her luxury."
4 Then I heard another voice from heaven saying,
  "Come out of her, my people,
  so that you do not take part in her sins,
  and so that you do not share in her plagues;
5 for her sins are heaped high as heaven,
  and God has remembered her iniquities.
6 Render to her as she herself has rendered,
  and repay her double for her deeds;
  mix a double draught for her in the cup she mixed.
7 As she glorified herself and lived luxuriously,
  so give her a like measure of torment and grief.
Since in her heart she says,
  'I rule as a queen;
  I am no widow,
  and I will never see grief,'
8 therefore her plagues will come in a single day —
  pestilence and mourning and famine —
  and she will be burned with fire;
  for mighty is the Lord God who judges her."

9 And the kings of the earth, who committed fornication and lived in
  luxury with her, will weep and wail over her when they see the smoke
  of her burning; 10 they will stand far off, in fear of her torment, and
  say,
    "Alas, alas, the great city,
    Babylon, the mighty city!
    For in one hour your judgment has come."

11 And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn for her, since no
  one buys their cargo anymore, 12 cargo of gold, silver, jewels and
  pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet, all kinds of scented wood, all
  articles of ivory, all articles of costly wood, bronze, iron, and marble, 13
  cinnamon, spice, incense, myrrh, frankincense, wine, olive oil, choice
flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, slaves — and human lives.

14 "The fruit for which your soul longed has gone from you, and all your dainties and your splendor are lost to you, never to be found again!"

15 The merchants of these wares, who gained wealth from her, will stand far off, in fear of her torment, weeping and mourning aloud,

16 "Alas, alas, the great city, clothed in fine linen, in purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, with jewels, and with pearls!

17 For in one hour all this wealth has been laid waste!"

And all shipmasters and seafarers, sailors and all whose trade is on the sea, stood far off 18 and cried out as they saw the smoke of her burning,

"What city was like the great city?"

19 And they threw dust on their heads, as they wept and mourned, crying out,

"Alas, alas, the great city, where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth!
For in one hour she has been laid waste."

20 Rejoice over her, O heaven, you saints and apostles and prophets! For God has given judgment for you against her.

21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying,

"With such violence Babylon the great city will be thrown down, and will be found no more;"
22 and the sound of harpists and minstrels and of flutists and trumpeters will be heard in you no more;  
and an artisan of any trade  
will be found in you no more;  
and the sound of the millstone  
will be heard in you no more;  
23 and the light of a lamp  
will shine in you no more;  
and the voice of bridegroom and bride  
will be heard in you no more;  
for your merchants were the magnates of the earth,  
and all nations were deceived by your sorcery.  
24 And in you was found the blood of prophets and of saints,  
and of all who have been slaughtered on earth."  

[Revelation 19]  
Doxology  

1 After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying,  
"Hallelujah!  
Salvation and glory and power to our God,  
for his judgments are true and just;  
he has judged the great whore  
who corrupted the earth with her fornication,  
and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants."  
3 Once more they said,  
"Hallelujah!  
The smoke goes up from her forever and ever."  
4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who is seated on the throne, saying,  
"Amen. Hallelujah!"  
5 And from the throne came a voice saying,  
"Praise our God,  
all you his servants,  
and all who fear him,  
small and great."
6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like
the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals,
crying out,
   "Hallelujah!
   For the Lord our God
   the Almighty reigns.
7 Let us rejoice and exult
   and give him the glory,
   for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
   and his bride has made herself ready;
8 to her it has been granted to be clothed
   with fine linen, bright and pure" —
   for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

9 And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are
invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me,
"These are true words of God." 10 Then I fell down at his feet to
worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow
servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus.
Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The victory of Christ and the heavenly armies

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse! Its rider is
called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes
war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many
diadems; and he has a name inscribed that no one knows but himself.
13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called The
Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, wearing fine linen, white
and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth
comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he
will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the
fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh
he has a name inscribed, "King of kings and Lord of lords."

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he
called to all the birds that fly in midheaven, "Come, gather for the
great supper of God, 18 to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains,
the flesh of the mighty, the flesh of horses and their riders — flesh of all, both free and slave, both small and great." 19 Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against the rider on the horse and against his army. 20 And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed in its presence the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 And the rest were killed by the sword of the rider on the horse, the sword that came from his mouth; and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.

[Revelation 20]
The defeat of Satan; the temporary imprisonment of Satan and the reign of Christ and the martyrs

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the pit, and locked and sealed it over him, so that he would deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be let out for a little while.

4 Then I saw thrones, and those seated on them were given authority to judge. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. Over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him a thousand years.

The release of Satan and the final conflict

7 When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will come out to deceive the nations at the four corners of
the earth, Gog and Magog, in order to gather them for battle; they are as numerous as the sands of the sea. 9 They marched up over the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from heaven and consumed them. 10 And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The last judgment

11 Then I saw a great white throne and the one who sat on it; the earth and the heaven fled from his presence, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, the book of life. And the dead were judged according to their works, as recorded in the books. 13 And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and all were judged according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire; 15 and anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

[Revelation 21]
Vision of the new Jerusalem; the renewal of creation

1 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; 4 he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."
5 And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." 6 Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. 7 Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children. 8 But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

The measuring of the city

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. 11 It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. 12 It has a great, high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites; 13 on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 The angel who talked to me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. 16 The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width; and he measured the city with his rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. 17 He also measured its wall, one hundred forty-four cubits by human measurement, which the angel was using. 18 The wall is built of jasper, while the city is pure gold, clear as glass. 19 The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every jewel; the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, each of the gates
is a single pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass.

22 I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. 23 And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 25 Its gates will never be shut by day — and there will be no night there. 26 People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. 27 But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

[Revelation 22]
The river and the tree of life

1 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. 3 Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; 4 they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. 5 And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Epilogue

6 And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true, for the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place."

7 "See, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."
8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me; 9 but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!"

10 And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. 11 Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy."

12 "See, I am coming soon; my reward is with me, to repay according to everyone's work. 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end."

14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. 15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

16 "It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star."
17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come."
   And let everyone who hears say, "Come."
   And let everyone who is thirsty come.
   Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift.

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this book; 19 if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away that person's share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.
20 The one who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.