

What Jesus Said

The Red Parts Bible

(This document includes the words of Jesus from the New Testament, particularly the Gospels, with a few of his statements from Acts. The biblically adapted text is from the J.B. Phillips New Testament Bible. Our intention was to include only enough surrounding information about the circumstances surrounding his words so that one would understand the context of Jesus' statements. It is our hope that reading Jesus in this way will allow a deeper perspective and appreciation of the Master's life and teachings. Jesus' statements are in red.)

I

From the Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus came from Galilee to be baptized by John. John tried to prevent him, but Jesus replied:

"It is right for us to meet all the Law's demands - let it be so now."

The devil said to Jesus, "If you really are the Son of God tell these stones to turn into loaves," and Jesus answered in response:

"The scripture says 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Then from a high place the devil said. "If you really are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for the scripture says, 'He shall give his angels charge concerning you and in their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

"Yes and the scripture also says, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"

Then from a mountain top the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their magnificence. "Everything there I will give you," he said to him, "if you will fall down and worship me."

"Away with you, Satan! The scripture says, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only you shall serve.'"

After John died, Jesus began to preach and to say:

"You must change your hearts - for the kingdom of Heaven has arrived."

The two brothers, Simon (Peter) and Andrew, were fishing and Jesus said to them,

"Follow me and I will teach you to catch men!"

When Jesus saw vast crowds before him he went up the hillside and after he had sat down his disciples came to him. Then he began his teaching by saying to them:

"How happy are the humble-minded, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs! How happy are those who know what sorrow means for they will be given courage and comfort! Happy are those who claim nothing, for the whole earth will belong to them! Happy are those who are hungry and thirsty for goodness, for they will be fully satisfied! Happy are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown to them! Happy are the utterly sincere, for they will see God! Happy are those who make peace, for they will be sons of God! Happy are those who have suffered persecution for the cause of goodness, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs!

And what happiness will be yours when people blame you and ill-treat you and say all kinds of slanderous things against you for my sake! Be glad then. Yes, be tremendously glad, for your reward in Heaven is magnificent. They persecuted the prophets before your time in exactly the same way.

"You are the earth's salt. But if the salt should become tasteless, what can make it salt again? It is completely useless and can only be thrown out of doors and stamped under foot. You are the world's light - it is impossible to hide a town built on the top of a hill. Men do not light a lamp and put it under a bucket. They put it on a lamp-stand and it gives light for everybody in the house. Let your light shine like that in the sight of men. Let them see the good things you do and praise your Father in Heaven.

"You must not think I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to complete them. Indeed, I assure you that, while Heaven and earth last, the Law will not lose a single dot or comma until its purpose is complete. This means that whoever now relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men to do the same will himself be called least in Heaven. But whoever teaches and practices them will be called great in the kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that your goodness must be a far better thing than the goodness of the scribes and Pharisees before you can set foot in the kingdom of Heaven at all!

"You have heard that it was said to the people in the old days, 'You shall not murder,' and anyone who does must stand his trial. But I say to you that anyone who is angry with his brother must stand his trial; anyone who contemptuously calls his brother a fool must face the supreme court; and anyone who looks on his brother as a lost soul is, himself, heading straight for the fire of destruction.

"So if, while you are offering your gift at the altar, you should remember that your brother has something against you, you must leave your gift there before the altar and go away. Make your peace with your brother first, then come and offer your gift.

"Come to terms quickly with your opponent while you have the chance, or else he may hand you over to the judge and the judge in turn hand you over to the officer of the court and you will be thrown into prison. Believe me; you will never get out again till you have paid your last farthing!

"You have heard that it was said to the people in the old days, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that every man who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her - in his heart. Yes, if your right eye leads you astray, pluck it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than that your whole body should be thrown on to the

rubbish-heap. Yes, if your right hand leads you astray, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than that your whole body should go to the rubbish-heap.

"It also used to be said that 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of unfaithfulness, is making her an adulteress. And whoever marries the woman who has been divorced also commits adultery.

"Again, you have heard that the people in the old days were told - 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord,' but I say to you, don't use an oath at all. Don't swear by Heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool, nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great king. No, and don't swear by your own head, for you cannot make a single hair - white or black! Whatever you have to say, let your 'yes' be a plain 'yes' and your 'no' a plain 'no' - anything more than this has a taint of evil.

"You have heard that it used to be said 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' but I tell you, don't resist the man who wants to harm you. If a man hits your right cheek, turn the other one to him as well.

"If a man wants to sue you for your coat, let him have it and your overcoat as well. If anybody forces you to go a mile with him, do more - go two miles with him. Give to the man who asks anything from you, and don't turn away from the man who wants to borrow.

"You have heard that it used to be said, 'You shall love your neighbor,' and 'hate your enemy,' but I tell you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Heavenly Father. For he makes the sun rise upon evil men as well as good, and he sends his rain upon honest and dishonest men alike.

"For if you love only those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even tax-collectors do that! And if you exchange greetings only with your own circle, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do that much. No, you are to be perfect, like your Heavenly Father.

"Beware of doing your good deeds conspicuously to catch men's eyes or you will miss the reward of your Heavenly Father. So when you do good to other people, don't hire a trumpeter to go in front of you like those play-actors in the synagogues and streets who make sure that men admire them. Believe me, they have had all the reward they are going to get! No, when you give to charity, don't even let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be secret. Your Father who knows all secrets will reward you.

"And then, when you pray, don't be like the play-actors. They love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at street corners so that people may see them at it. Believe me, they have had all the reward they are going to get. But when you pray, go into your own room, shut your door and pray to your Father privately. Your Father who sees all private things will reward you. And when you pray don't rattle off long prayers like the pagans who think they will be heard because they use so many words. Don't be like them. After all, God, who is your Father, knows your needs before you ask him. Pray then like this - 'Our Heavenly Father, may your name be honored; May your kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day the bread we need, forgive us what we owe to you, as we have also forgiven those who owe anything to us. Keep us clear of temptation, and save us from evil.'

"For if you forgive other people their failures, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you will not forgive other people, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your failures.

"Then, when you fast, don't look like those miserable play-actors! For they deliberately disfigure their faces so that people may see that they are fasting. Believe me, they have had all their

reward. No, when you fast, brush your hair and wash your face so that nobody knows that you are fasting - let it be a secret between you and your Father. And your Father who knows all secrets will reward you.

"Don't pile up treasures on earth, where moth and rust can spoil them and thieves can break in and steal. But keep your treasure in Heaven where there is neither moth nor rust to spoil it and nobody can break in and steal. For wherever your treasure is, you may be certain that your heart will be there too!

"The lamp of the body is the eye. If your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. If all the light you have is darkness, it is dark indeed!

"No one can be loyal to two masters. He is bound to hate one and love the other, or support one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and the power of money at the same time.

"That is why I say to you, don't worry about living - wondering what you are going to eat or drink, or what you are going to wear. Surely life is more important than food, and the body more important than the clothes you wear. Look at the birds in the sky. They never sow nor reap nor store away in barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you much more valuable to him than they are? Can any of you, however much he worries, make himself an inch taller? And why do you worry about clothes? Consider how the wild flowers grow. They neither work nor weave, but I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was never arrayed like one of these! Now if God so clothes the flowers of the field, which are alive today and burnt in the stove tomorrow, is he not much more likely to clothe you, you 'little-faiths'?"

"So don't worry and don't keep saying, 'what shall we eat, what shall we drink or what shall we wear?!' That is what pagans are always looking for. Your Heavenly Father knows that you need them all. Set your heart on the kingdom and his goodness, and all these things will come to you as a matter of course.

"Don't worry at all then about tomorrow. Tomorrow can take care of itself! One day's trouble is enough for one day."

"Don't criticize people, and you will not be criticized. For you will be judged by the way you criticize others, and the measure you give will be the measure you receive.

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and fail to notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me get the speck out of your eye,' when there is a plank in your own? You fraud! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you can see clearly enough to remove your brother's speck of dust.

"You must not give holy things to dogs, nor must you throw your pearls before pigs - or they may trample them underfoot and turn and attack you.

"Ask and it will be given to you. Search and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened for you. The one who asks will always receive; the one who is searching will always find, and the door is opened to the man who knocks.

"If any of you were asked by his son for bread would you be likely to give him a stone, or if he asks for a fish would you give him a snake? If you then, for all your evil, quite naturally give good things to your children, how much more likely is it that your Heavenly Father will give good things to those who ask him?"

"Treat other people exactly as you would like to be treated by them - this is the essence of all true religion.

"Go in by the narrow gate. For the wide gate has a broad road which leads to disaster and there are many people going that way. The narrow gate and the hard road lead out into life and only a few are finding it.

"Be on your guard against false religious teachers, who come to you dressed up as sheep but are really greedy wolves. You can tell them by their fruit. Do you pick a bunch of grapes from a thorn-bush or figs from a clump of thistles? Every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree is incapable of producing bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. The tree that fails to produce good fruit is cut down and burnt. So you may know men by their fruit.

"It is not everyone who keeps saying to me 'Lord, Lord' who will enter the kingdom of Heaven, but the man who actually does my Heavenly Father's will.

"In 'that day' many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we preach in your name, didn't we cast out devils in your name, and do many great things in your name?' Then I shall tell them plainly, 'I have never known you. Go away from me, you have worked on the side of evil!'

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a sensible man who builds his house on the rock. Down came the rain and up came the floods, while the winds blew and roared upon that house - and it did not fall because its foundations were on the rock.

"And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not follow them can be compared with a foolish man who built his house on sand. Down came the rain and up came the floods, while the winds blew and battered that house till it collapsed, and fell with a great crash."

There was a leper who came and knelt in front of Jesus. "Sir," he said, "if you want to, you can make me clean." Jesus stretched out his hand and placed it on the leper saying:

"Of course I want to. Be clean!"

And at once he was clear of the leprosy.

"Mind you, say nothing to anybody. Go straight off and show yourself to the priest and make the offering for your recovery that Moses prescribed, as evidence to the authorities."

In Capernaum a centurion approached. "Sir," he implored Jesus, "my servant is in bed at home paralyzed and in dreadful pain."

"I will come and heal him."

"Sir," replied the centurion, "I'm not important enough for you to come under my roof. Just give the order, please, and my servant will recover. And with that Jesus said to those following him:

"Believe me, I have never found faith like this, even in Israel! I tell you that many people will come from east and west and sit at my table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of

Heaven. But those who should have belonged to the kingdom will be banished to the darkness outside, where there will be tears and bitter regret.”

Then Jesus said to the centurion:

Go home now, and everything will happen as you have believed it will."

A scribe came up to Jesus and said to him, "Master, I will follow you wherever you go."

"Foxes have earths, birds in the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere that he can call his own,"

Another of his disciples said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him:

"Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead."

Crossing the lake, Jesus was presented with some people who brought a paralytic lying flat on his bed. When Jesus saw their faith he said to the paralytic:

"Cheer up, my son! Your sins are forgiven."

Some of the scribes who witnessed this thought to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." But Jesus realized what they were thinking, and said:

"Why must you have such evil thoughts in your minds? Do you think it is easier to say to this man, 'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Get up and walk?' But to make it quite plain that the Son of Man has full authority on earth to forgive sins" - and here he spoke to the paralytic - "Get up, pick up your bed and go home."

And the man sprang to his feet and went home.

9:9 - Jesus passed a man called Matthew sitting at his desk in the tax-collector's office and said:

"Follow me!"

The man got to his feet and followed him. Later, at dinner, a good many tax-collectors and other disreputable people came and joined Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees said to the disciples, "Why does your master have his meals with tax-collectors and sinners?" But Jesus heard this and replied:

"It is not the fit and flourishing who need the doctor, but those who are ill! Suppose you go away and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' In any case I did not come to invite the 'righteous' but the 'sinners.'"

John's disciples approached Jesus. "Why is it that we and the Pharisees observe the fasts, but your disciples do nothing of the kind?"

"Can you expect wedding-guests to mourn while they have the bridegroom with them? The day will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them and they will certainly fast then!

"Nobody sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on to an old coat, for the patch will pull away from the coat and the hole will be worse than ever. Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins - otherwise the skins burst, the wine is spilled and the skins are ruined. But they put new wine into new skins and both are preserved."

A woman who had a hemorrhage approached Jesus from behind and touched the edge of his cloak. Jesus turned around and saw her.

"Cheer up, my daughter, your faith has made you well!"

And the woman was completely cured.

Jesus went to the house of an official whose child was presumed dead. A noisy crowd was there, and musicians. Jesus said:

"You must all go outside; the little girl is not dead, she is fast asleep."

The people did not believe him, but once they left, Jesus went to the girl's room, took her hand, and she got up.

Two blind men followed Jesus with the cry, "have pity on us, Son of David!" And when he had gone inside the house these two came up to him and Jesus said:

"Do you believe I can do it?"

"Yes, Lord," they replied. Then he touched their eyes, saying:

"You have believed and you will not be disappointed."

Their sight returned, and Jesus told them:

"Don't let anyone know about his."

In their travels, vast crowds came to see them and Jesus was moved with pity, for they seemed as a flock of sheep with no shepherd. To his disciples, he said:

"The harvest is great enough, but the reapers are few. So you must pray to the Lord of the harvest to send men out to reap it."

And out went the twelve, with these instructions:

"Don't turn off into any of the heathen roads, and don't go into any Samaritan town. Concentrate on the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go proclaim that the kingdom of Heaven has arrived. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure the lepers, drive out devils - give, as you have received, without any charge whatever.

"Don't take any gold or silver or even coppers to put in your purse; nor a knapsack for the journey, nor even a change of clothes, or sandals, or a staff. The workman is worth his keep!

"Wherever you go, whether it is into a town or a village, find out someone who is respected, and stay with him until you leave. As you enter his house give it your blessing. If the house deserves it, the peace of your blessing will come to it. But if it doesn't, your peace will return to you.

"And if no one will welcome you or even listen to what you have to say, leave that house or town, and once outside it, shake off the dust of that place from your feet. Believe me, Sodom and Gomorrah will fare better in the Day of Judgment than that town.

"Here I am sending you out like sheep with wolves all around you, so be as wise as serpents and yet as harmless as doves. But be on your guard against men, for they will take you to the court and flog you in their synagogues. You will be brought into the presence of governors and kings because of me - to give your witness to them and to the heathen.

"But when they do arrest you, never worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say. You will be told at the time what you are to say. For it will not be really you who are speaking but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

"Brothers are going to betray their brothers to death, and fathers their children. Children are going to betray their parents and have them executed. You yourselves will be universally hated because of my name. But the man who endures to the very end will be safe and sound.

"But when they persecute you in one town make your escape to the next. Believe me, you will not have covered the towns of Israel before the Son of Man arrives. The disciple is not superior to his teacher any more than the servant is superior to his master, for what is good enough for the teacher is good enough for the disciple as well, and the servant will not fare better than his master. If men call the master of the household the 'Prince of Evil,' what sort of names will they give to his servants? But never let them frighten you, for there is nothing covered up which is not going to be exposed, or anything private which will not be made public. The things I tell you in the dark you must say in the daylight, and the things you hear in your private ear you must proclaim from the house-tops.

"Never be afraid of those who can kill the body but are powerless to kill the soul! Far better to stand in awe of the one who has the power to destroy body and soul in the fires of destruction!

"Two sparrows sell for a farthing, don't they? Yet not a single sparrow falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Never be afraid, then - you are far more valuable than sparrows.

"Every man who publicly acknowledges me I shall acknowledge in the presence of my Father in Heaven, but the man who disowns me before men I shall disown before my Father in Heaven.

"Never think I have come to bring peace upon the earth. No, I have not come to bring peace but a sword! For I have come to set a man against his own father, a daughter against her own mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies will be those who live in his own house.

"Anyone who puts his love for father or mother above his love for me does not deserve to be mine, and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me, and neither is the man who refuses to take up his cross and follow my way. The man who has found his own life will lose it, but the man who has lost it for my sake will find it.

"Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me is welcoming the one who sent me.

"Whoever welcomes a prophet just because he is a prophet will get a prophet's reward. And whoever welcomes a good man just because he is a good man will get a good man's reward. Believe me, anyone who gives even a drink of water to one of these little ones, just because he is my disciple, will by no means lose his reward."

John the Baptist was in prison and he sent a message through his own disciples to Jesus, asking the question, "Are you the one who was to come or are we to look for somebody else?"

"Go and tell John what you see and hear - that blind men are recovering their sight, cripples are walking, lepers being healed, the deaf hearing, the dead being brought to life and the good news is being given to those in need. And happy is the man who never loses faith in me."

As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began talking to the crowd about John:

"What did you go out into the desert to look at? - A reed waving in the breeze? No? Then what was it you went out to see? - A man dressed in fine clothes? But the men who wear fine clothes live in the courts of kings! But what did you really go to see? - a prophet? Yes, I tell you, a prophet and far more than a prophet! This is the man of whom the scripture says, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'

"Believe me, no one greater than John the Baptist has ever been born of all mankind, and yet a humble member of the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.

"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of Heaven has been taken by storm and eager men are forcing their way into it. For the Law and all the prophets foretold it till the time of John and - if you can believe it - John himself is the 'Elijah' who must come before the kingdom. The man who has ears to hear must use them.

"But how can I show what the people of this generation are like? They are like children sitting in the market-place calling out to their friends, 'We played at weddings for you but you wouldn't dance, and we played at funerals and you wouldn't cry!' For John came in the strictest austerity and people say, 'He's crazy!' Then the Son of Man came, enjoying life, and people say, 'Look, a drunkard and a glutton - the bosom-friend of the tax-collector and the sinner.' Ah, well, wisdom stands or falls by her own actions.

"Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida! For if Tyre and Sidon had seen the demonstrations of God's power which you have seen they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. Yet I tell you this, that it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon in the Day of Judgment than for you.

"And as for you, Capernaum, are you on your way up to Heaven? I tell you, you will go hurtling down among the dead! If Sodom had seen the miracles that you have seen, Sodom would be standing today. Yet I tell you now that it will be more bearable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for you.

"O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, I thank you for hiding these things from the clever and intelligent and for showing them to mere children. Yes, I thank you, Father, that this was your will.

"Everything has been put in my hands by my Father, and nobody knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son - and the man to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and over-burdened, and I will give you rest! Put on my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

One day the Pharisees saw the disciples picking from a farm on the Sabbath and eating the food. To Jesus, they said, "There, you see, your disciples are doing what the Law forbids them to do on the Sabbath."

"Haven't any of you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? - how he went into the house of God and ate the presentation loaves which he and his followers were not allowed to eat since only priests can do so?

"Haven't any of you read in the Law that every Sabbath day priests in the Temple can break the Sabbath and yet remain blameless? I tell you that there is something more important than the Temple here. If you had grasped the meaning of the scripture 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have been so quick to condemn the innocent! For the Son of Man is master even of the Sabbath."

Then Jesus went into their synagogue, where there happened to be a man with a shriveled hand. "Is it right to heal anyone on the Sabbath day?" which was against the law.

"If any of you had a sheep which fell into a ditch on the Sabbath day, would he not take hold of it and pull it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep? You see, it is right to do good on the Sabbath day."

Then Jesus said to the man:

"Stretch out your hand!"

And it was restored as sound as the other.

When a devil-possessed man was healed by Jesus, the Pharisees, on hearing about it, said to each other, "This man is only expelling devils because he is in league with Beelzebub, the prince of devils." Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to them:

"Any kingdom divided against itself is bound to collapse, and no town or household divided against itself can last for long. If it is Satan who is expelling Satan, then he is divided against himself - so how do you suppose that his kingdom can continue? And if I expel devils because I am an ally of Beelzebub, what alliance do your sons make when they do the same thing? They

can settle that question for you! But if I am expelling devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has swept over you unawares! How do you suppose anyone could get into a strong man's house and steal his property unless he first tied up the strong man? But if he did that, he could ransack his whole house.

"The man who is not on my side is against me, and the man who does not gather with me is really scattering. That is why I tell you that men may be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit cannot be forgiven. A man may say a word against the Son of Man and be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit cannot be forgiven either in this world or in the world to come!

"You must choose between having a good tree with good fruit and a rotten tree with rotten fruit. For you can tell a tree at once by its fruit.

"You serpent's brood, how can you say anything good out of your evil hearts? For a man's words depend on what fills his heart. A good man gives out good - from the goodness stored in his heart; a bad man gives out evil - from his store of evil. I tell you that men will have to answer at the Day of Judgment for every careless word they utter - for it is your words that will acquit you, and your words that will condemn you."

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said, "Master, we want to see a sign from you." Jesus told them:

"It is an evil and unfaithful generation that craves for a sign, and no sign will be given to it - except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was in the belly of that great sea-monster for three days and nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and nights. The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation in the judgment and will condemn it. For they did repent when Jonah preached to them, and you have more than Jonah's preaching with you now! The Queen of the South will stand up in the judgment with this generation and will condemn it. For she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and you have more than the wisdom of Solomon with you now!

"When the evil spirit goes out of a man it wanders through waterless places looking for rest and never finding it. Then it says, 'I will go back to my house from which I came.' When it arrives it finds it unoccupied, but clean and all in order. Then it goes and collects seven other spirits more evil than itself to keep it company, and they all go in and make themselves at home. The last state of that man is worse than the first - and that is just what will happen to this evil generation."

While he was talking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers happened to be standing outside wanting to speak to him. Somebody said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are outside wanting to speak to you." But Jesus replied to the one who told him,

"Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" and with a gesture of his hand towards his disciples he went on, "There are my mother and brothers! For whoever does the will of my Heavenly Father is brother and sister and mother to me."

Sitting by the lakeside, a crowd collected around Jesus, so he went aboard a small boat so he could talk to the people standing on the beach.

"There was once a man who went out to sow. In his sowing some of the seeds fell by the road-side and the birds swooped down and gobbled them up. Some fell on stony patches where they had very little soil. They sprang up quickly in the shallow soil, but when the sun came up they were scorched by the heat and withered away because they had no roots. Some seeds fell among thorn-bushes and the thorns grew up and choked the life out of them. But some fell on good soil and produced a crop - some a hundred times what had been sown, some sixty and some thirty times. The man who has ears should use them!"

At this the disciples approached him and asked, "Why do you talk to them in parables?"

"Because you have been given the chance to understand the secrets of the kingdom of Heaven, but they have not. For when a man has something, more is given to him till he has plenty. But if he has nothing even his nothing will be taken away from him. This is why I speak to them in these parables, because they go through life with their eyes open, but see nothing, and with their ears open, but understand nothing of what they hear. They are the living fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the heart of this people has grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their heart and turn, so that I should heal them.'

"But how fortunate you are to have eyes that see and ears that hear! Believe me, a great many prophets and good men have longed to see what you are seeing and they never saw it. Yes, and they longed to hear what you are hearing and they never heard it.

"Now listen to the parable of the sower. When a man hears the message of the kingdom and does not grasp it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is like the seed sown by the road-side. The seed sown on the stony patches represents the man who hears the message and eagerly accepts it. But it has not taken root in him and does not last long - the moment trouble or persecution arises through the message he gives up his faith at once. The seed sown among the thorns represents the man who hears the message, and then the worries of this life and the illusions of wealth choke it to death and so it produces no 'crop' in his life. But the seed sown on good soil is the man who both hears and understands the message. His life shows a good crop, a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

"The kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the crop came up and ripened, the weeds appeared as well. Then the owner's servants came up to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where did all these weeds come from?' 'Some blackguard has done this to spite me,' he replied. 'Do you want us then to go out and pull them all up?' said the servants. 'No,' he returned, 'if you pull up the weeds now, you would pull up the wheat with them. Let them both grow together till the harvest. And at harvest-time I shall tell the reapers, 'Collect all the weeds first and tie them up in bundles ready to burn, but collect the wheat and store it in my barn.'"

"The kingdom of Heaven is like a tiny grain of mustard-seed which a man took and sowed in his field. As a seed it is the smallest of them all, but it grows to be the biggest of all plants. It becomes a tree, big enough for birds to come and nest in its branches."

"The kingdom of Heaven is like yeast, taken by a woman and put into three measures of flour until the whole lot had risen."

Later his disciples came and said, "Please explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

"The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the whole world. The good seed is the sons of the kingdom, while the weeds are the sons of the evil one. The blackguard who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of this world. The reapers are angels.

"Just as weeds are gathered up and burned in the fire so will it happen at the end of this world. The Son of Man will send out his angels and they will uproot from the kingdom everything that is spoiling it, and all those who live in defiance of its laws, and will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be tears and bitter regret. Then the good will shine out like the sun in their Father's kingdom. The man who has ears should use them.

"Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like some treasure which has been buried in a field. A man finds it and buries it again, and goes off overjoyed to sell all his possessions to buy himself that field.

"Or again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. When he has found a single pearl of great value, he goes and sells all his possessions and buys it.

"Or the kingdom of Heaven is like a big net thrown into the sea collecting all kinds of fish. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore and sit down and pick out the good ones for the barrels, but they throw away the bad. That is how it will be at the end of this world. The angels will go out and pick out the wicked from among the good and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be tears and bitter regret.

"Have you grasped all this?"

"Yes," they replied.

"You can see, then, how every one who knows the Law and becomes a disciple of the kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who can produce from his store both the new and the old."

Some of the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came and asked Jesus, "Why do your disciples break our ancient tradition and eat their food without washing their hands properly?"

"Tell me, why do you break God's commandment through your tradition? For God said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say that if a man tells his parents, 'Whatever use I might have been to you is now given to God,' then he owes no further duty to his parents. And so your tradition empties the commandment of God of all its meaning. You hypocrites! Isaiah describes you beautifully when he said: 'These people draw near to me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'"

Then Jesus called the crowd to him and said:

"Listen, and understand this thoroughly! It is not what goes into a man's mouth that makes him common or unclean. It is what comes out of a man's mouth that makes him unclean."

Later his disciples came to him and said, "Do you know that the Pharisees are deeply offended by what you said?"

"Every plant which my Heavenly Father did not plant will be pulled up by the roots," returned Jesus. "Let them alone. They are blind guides, and when one blind man leads another blind man they will both end up in the ditch!"

"Explain this parable to us," Peter said.

"Are you still unable to grasp things like that? Don't you see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and then out of the body altogether? But the things that come out of a man's mouth come from his heart and mind, and it is they that really make a man unclean. For it is from a man's mind that evil thoughts arise - murder, adultery, lust, theft, perjury and blasphemy. These are the things which make a man unclean, not eating without washing his hands properly!"

A Canaanite woman from those parts came to Jesus crying at the top of her voice, "Lord, have pity on me! My daughter is in a terrible state - a devil has got into her!" The disciples said, "Do send her away - she's still following us and calling out."

"I was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Then the woman came and knelt at his feet. "Lord, help me," she said.

"It is not right, you know, to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

"Yes, Lord, I know, but even the dogs live on the scraps that fall from their master's table!"

"You certainly don't lack faith. It shall be as you wish."

The daughter was cured.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees asked Jesus to give them a sign from Heaven, but he replied:

"When the evening comes you say, 'Ah, fine weather - the sky is red.' In the morning you say, 'There will be a storm today, the sky is red and threatening.' Yes, you know how to interpret the look of the sky but you have no idea how to interpret the signs of the times! A wicked and unfaithful age insists on a sign; and it will not be given any sign at all but that of the prophet Jonah."

Then his disciples came to Jesus, having forgotten to bring bread with them.

"Keep your eyes open and be on your guard against the 'yeast' of the Pharisees and Sadducees!"

But they were arguing with each other, and saying, "We forgot to bring the bread."

"Why all this argument among yourselves about not bringing any bread, you little-faiths? Don't you understand yet, or have you forgotten the five loaves and the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up afterwards; or the seven loaves and the four thousand and how many baskets you took up then? I wonder why you don't understand that I wasn't talking about bread at all - I told you to beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

In Caesarea-Philippi Jesus asked his disciples:

"Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

"Well, some say John the Baptist," they told him. "Some say Elijah, others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

"But what about you? Who do you say that I am?"

Simon Peter answered, "You are Christ, the Son of the living God!"

"Simon, son of Jonah, you are a fortunate man indeed! For it was not your own nature but my Heavenly Father who has revealed this truth to you! Now I tell you that you are Peter the rock, and it is on this rock that I am going to found my Church, and the powers of death will never prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; whatever you forbid on earth will be what is forbidden in Heaven and whatever you permit on earth will be what is permitted in Heaven!"

Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he would have to go to Jerusalem, and endure much suffering from the elders, chief priests and scribes, and finally be killed; and be raised to life again on the third day.

In response, Peter took him aside and started to remonstrate with him over this. "God bless you, Master! Nothing like this must happen to you!" Then Jesus turned round and said to Peter:

"Out of my way, Satan! ... You stand right in my path, Peter, when you look at things from man's point of view and not from God's"

"If anyone wants to follow in my footsteps he must give up all right to himself, take up his cross and follow me. For the man who wants to save his life will lose it; but the man who loses his life for my sake will find it. For what good is it for a man to gain the whole world at the price of his own soul? What could a man offer to buy back his soul once he had lost it?"

"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father and in the company of his angels and then he will repay every man for what he has done. Believe me, there are some standing here today who will know nothing of death till they have seen the Son of Man coming as a king."

The disciples asked of Jesus, "Why is it, then, that the scribes always say Elijah must come first?"

"Yes, Elijah does come first and begins the world's reformation. But I tell you that Elijah has come already and men did not recognize him. They did what they liked with him, and they will do the same to the Son of Man."

A man came and knelt in front of Jesus. "Lord, do have pity on my son, for he is a lunatic and is in a terrible state. I brought him to your disciples but they couldn't cure him."

"You really are an unbelieving and difficult people. How long must I be with you, and how long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me!"

Then Jesus reprimanded the evil spirit and it went out of the boy. The disciples approached Jesus privately and asked, "Why weren't we able to get rid of it?"

"Because you have so little faith. I assure you that if you have as much faith as a grain of mustard-seed you can say to this hill, 'Up you get and move over there!' and it will move - you will find nothing is impossible. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

When they arrived at Capernaum the Temple tax-collectors said to Peter, "Your master doesn't pay Temple-tax, we presume?" And Peter said that he did. Later when he went into the house Jesus anticipated what he was going to say.

"What do you think, Simon? Whom do the kings of this world get their rates and taxes from - their own people or from others?"

"From others," replied Peter.

"Then the family is exempt. Yet we don't want to give offence to these people, so go down to the lake and throw in your hook. Take the first fish that bites, open his mouth, and you'll find a coin. Take that and give it to them, for both of us."

The disciples came to Jesus with the question, "Who is really greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?" Jesus called a little child to his side.

"Believe me, unless you change your whole outlook and become like little children you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven. It is the man who can be as humble as this little child who is greatest in the kingdom of Heaven.

"Anyone who welcomes one child like this for my sake is welcoming me. But if anyone leads astray one of these little children who believe in me he would be better off thrown into the depths of the sea with a mill-stone hung round his neck! Alas for the world with its pitfalls! In the nature of things there must be pitfalls, yet alas for the man who is responsible for them!

"If your hand or your foot is a hindrance to your faith, cut it off and throw it away. It is a good thing to go into life maimed or crippled - rather than to have both hands and feet and be thrown on to the everlasting fire. Yes, and if your eye leads you astray, tear it out and throw it away. It is a good thing to go one-eyed into life - rather than to have both your eyes and be thrown on the fire of the rubbish heap.

"Be careful that you never despise a single one of these little ones - for I tell you that they have angels who see my Father's face continually in Heaven.

"What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one wanders away from the rest, won't he leave the ninety-nine on the hill-side and set out to look for the one who has wandered away? Yes, and if he should chance to find it I assure you he is more delighted over that one than he is over the ninety-nine who never wandered away. You can understand then that it is never the will of your Father in Heaven that a single one of these little ones should be lost.

"But if your brother wrongs you, go and have it out with him at once - just between the two of you. If he will listen to you, you have won him back as your brother. But if he will not listen to you, take one or two others with you so that everything that is said may have the support of two or three witnesses. And if he still won't pay any attention, tell the matter to the church. And if he won't even listen to the church then he must be to you just like a pagan - or a tax-collector!

"Believe me, whatever you forbid upon earth will be what is forbidden in Heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be what is permitted in Heaven.

"And I tell you once more that if two of you on earth agree in asking for anything it will be granted to you by my Heavenly Father. For wherever two or three people come together in my name, I am there, right among you!"

Then Peter approached him with the question, "Master, how many times can my brother wrong me and I must forgive him? Would seven times be enough?"

"No, not seven times, but seventy times seven! For the kingdom of Heaven is like a king who decided to settle his accounts with his servants. When he had started calling in his accounts, a man was brought to him who owed him millions of pounds. And when it was plain that he had no means of repaying the debt, his master gave orders for him to be sold as a slave, and his wife and children and all his possessions as well, and the money to be paid over. At this the servant fell on his knees before his master, 'Oh, be patient with me!' he cried, 'and I will pay you back every penny!' Then his master was moved with pity for him, set him free and cancelled his debt.

"But when this same servant had left his master's presence, he found one of his fellow-servants who owed him a few shillings. He grabbed him and seized him by the throat, crying, 'Pay up what you owe me!' At this his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and implored him, 'Oh, be patient with me, and I will pay you back!' But he refused and went out and had him put in prison until he should repay the debt.

"When the other fellow-servants saw what had happened, they were horrified and told their master the whole incident.

"Then his master called him in. 'You wicked servant!' he said. 'Didn't I cancel all that debt when you begged me to do so? Oughtn't you to have taken pity on your fellow-servant as I, your master, took pity on you? And his master in anger handed him over to the gaolers till he should repay the whole debt. This is how my Heavenly Father will treat you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart."

Testing Jesus, the Pharisees asked. "Is it right for a man to divorce his wife on any grounds whatever?"

"Haven't you read that the one who created them from the beginning 'made them male and female' 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?' So they are no longer two separate people but one. No man therefore must separate what God has joined together."

"Then why did Moses command us to give a written divorce-notice and dismiss the woman?"

"It was because you knew so little of the meaning of love that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives! But that was not the original principle. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife on any grounds except her unfaithfulness and marries some other woman commits adultery."

"If that is a man's position with his wife, it is not worth getting married!"

"It is not everybody who can live up to this -- only those who have a special gift. For some are incapable of marriage from birth, some are made incapable by the action of men, and some have made themselves so for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven. Let the man who can accept what I have said accept it."

Some little children were brought to Jesus so that he could put his hands on them and pray for them. The disciples frowned on the parents' action but Jesus said:

"You must let little children come to me, and you must never stop them. The kingdom of Heaven belongs to little children like these!"

Then he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

A man came up to Jesus and said, "Master what good thing must I do to secure eternal life?"

"I wonder why you ask me about what is good. Only one is good. But if you want to enter that life you must keep the commandments."

"Which ones?"

"'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother,' and 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"I have carefully kept all these," returned the young man. "What is still missing in my life?"

"If you want to be perfect, go now and sell your property and give the money away to the poor - you will have riches in Heaven. Then come and follow me!"

When the young man heard that, he turned away crestfallen, for he was very wealthy. Then Jesus remarked to his disciples:

"Believe me, a rich man will find it very difficult to enter the kingdom of Heaven. Yes, I repeat, a camel could more easily squeeze through the eye of a needle than a rich man get into the kingdom of God!"

The disciples said, "Then who can possibly be saved?"

"Humanly speaking it is impossible; but with God anything is possible!"

Peter exclaimed, "Look, we have left everything and followed you. What is that going to be worth to us?"

"Believe me when I tell you that in the next world, when the Son of Man shall sit down on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones and become judges of the twelve tribes of Israel. Every man who has left houses or brothers or sisters or fathers or mother or children or land for my sake will receive it all back many times over, and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first now will be last then - and the last first!

"For the kingdom of Heaven is like a farmer going out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. He agreed with them on a wage of a silver coin a day and sent them to work. About nine o'clock he went and saw some others standing about in the market-place with nothing to do. 'You go to the vineyard too,' he said to them, 'and I will pay you a fair wage.' And off they went. At about mid-day and again at about three o'clock in the afternoon he went and did the same thing. Then at about five o'clock he went out and found some others standing about. 'Why are you standing about here all day doing nothing?' he asked them. 'Because no one has employed us,' they replied. 'You go off into the vineyard as well, then,' he said.

"When evening came the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last and ending with the first.' So those who were engaged at five o'clock came up and each man received a silver coin. But when the first to be employed came they reckoned they would get more, but they also received a silver coin a man. As they took their money they grumbled at the farmer and said, 'These last fellows have only put in one hour's work and you've treated them exactly the same as us who have gone through all the hard work and heat of the day!'

"But he replied to one of them, 'My friend, I'm not being unjust to you. Wasn't our agreement for a silver coin a day? Take your money and go home. It is my wish to give the latecomers as much as I give you. May I not do what I like with what belongs to me? Must you be jealous because I am generous?'

"So, many who are the last now will be the first then and the first last."

As he was about to go up to Jerusalem, Jesus took the twelve disciples aside and spoke to them as they walked along.

"Listen, we are now 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. They will hand him over to the heathen to ridicule and flog and crucify. And on the third day he will rise again!"

At this point the mother of the sons of Zebedee arrived with her sons to ask Jesus a favor.

"What is it you want?"

"Please say that these two sons of mine may sit one on each side of you when you are king!"

"You don't know what it is you are asking. Can you two drink what I have to drink?"

"Yes, we can," they answered.

"Ah, you will indeed 'drink my drink,' but as for sitting on either side of me, that is not for me to grant - that belongs to those for whom my Father has planned it."

When the other ten heard of this incident they were highly indignant with the two brothers. But Jesus said to them:

"You know that the rulers of the heathen lord it over them and that their great ones have absolute power? But it must not be so among you. No, whoever among you wants to be great must become the servant of all, and if he wants to be first among you he must be your slave - just as the Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life to set many others free."

As they approached Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples ahead telling them:

"Go into the village in front of you and you will at once find there an ass tethered, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. Should anyone say anything to you, you are to say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them immediately."

This correlated with the prophecy that said, 'Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold your king is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

Jesus went into the Temple and after disrupting the merchants and money changers, he cried:

"It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer.' But you have turned it into a 'den of thieves!'"

In the Temple the blind and the lame came to him and he healed them. The chief priests and the scribes were indignant hearing children shouting in the Temple, "God save the Son of David." "Can't you hear what these children are saying?" they asked Jesus.

"Yes, and haven't you ever read the words, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise?'"

Jesus saw a fig-tree growing by the side of the road that had nothing on it but leaves.

"No more fruit shall ever grow on you!"

And all at once the fig-tree withered away. The disciples said, "How on earth did the fig-tree wither away quite suddenly like that?"

"Believe me, if you have faith and have no doubts in you heart, you will not only do this to a fig-tree but even if you should say to this hill, 'Get up and throw yourself into the sea,' it will happen! Everything you ask for in prayer, if you have faith, you will receive."

When Jesus was teaching in the Temple, the chief priests and Jewish elders said, "What authority have you for what you're doing, and who gave you that authority?"

"I am also going to ask you one question, and if you answer it I will tell you what authority I have for what I do. John's baptism, now, did it come from Heaven or was it purely human?"

Fearing either response, they answered Jesus, "We do not know."

"Then I will not tell you by what authority I do these things! But what is your opinion about this? There was a man with two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Go and work in my vineyard today, my son,' The son said, 'All right, sir' - but he never went near it. Then his father approached the second son with the same request. He said, 'I won't.' But afterwards he changed his mind and went. Which of these two did what their father wanted?"

"The second one," they replied.

"Yes, and I tell you that tax-collectors and prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God in front of you! For John came to you as a saint, and you did not believe him - yet the tax-collectors and the prostitutes did! And, even after seeing that, you would not change your minds and believe him."

"Now listen to another story. There was once a man, a land-owner, who planted a vineyard, fenced it round, dug out a hole for the wine-press and built a watch-tower. Then he let it out to farm-workers and went abroad. When the vintage-time approached he sent his servants to the farm-workers to receive his share of the proceeds. But they took the servants, beat up one, killed another, and drove off a third with stones. Then he sent some more servants, a larger party than the first, but they treated them in just the same way. Finally he sent his own son, thinking, 'They will respect my son.' Yet when the farm-workers saw the son they said to each other, 'This fellow is the future owner. Come on, let's kill him and we shall get everything that he would have had!' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard returns, what will he do to those farm-workers?"

"He will kill those scoundrels without mercy and will let the vineyard out to other tenants, who will give him the produce at the right season."

"And have you never read these words of scripture? 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'

"Here, I tell you, lies the reason why the kingdom of God is going to be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its proper fruit.

"The kingdom of Heaven is like a king who arranged a wedding for his son. He sent his servants to summon those who had been invited to the festivities, but they refused to come. Then he tried again; he sent some more servants, saying to them, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Here is my wedding-breakfast all ready, my bullocks and fat cattle have been slaughtered and everything is prepared. Come along to the festivities."' But they took no notice of this and went off, one to his farm, and another to his business. As for the rest, they got hold of the servants, treated them disgracefully, and finally killed them. At this the king was very angry and sent his troops and killed those murderers and burned down their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is quite ready, but those who were invited were not good enough for it. So go off now to all the street corners and invite everyone you find there to the feast.' So the servants went out on to the streets and collected together all those whom they found, bad and good alike. And the hall became filled with guests. But when the king came in to inspect the guests, he noticed among them a man not dressed for a wedding. 'How did you come in here, my friend,' he said to him, 'without being properly dressed for the wedding?' And the man had nothing to say. Then the king said to the ushers, 'Tie him up and throw him into the darkness outside. There he can weep and regret his folly!' For many are invited but few are chosen."

The Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus in an argument, so they sent someone to him asking, "Master, we know that you are an honest man who teaches the way of God faithfully and that you don't care for human approval. Now tell us - 'is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?'"

"Why try this trick on me, you frauds? Show me the money you pay the tax with."

They handed him a coin, and he said to them:

"Whose face is this and whose name is in the inscription?"

"Caesar's," they said.

"Then give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God!"

Some Sadducees approached Jesus with this question: "Master, Moses said if a man should die without any children, his brother should marry his widow and raise up a family for him. Now, we have a case of seven brothers. The first one married and died, and since he had no family he left his wife to his brother. The same thing happened with the second and the third, right up to the seventh. Last of all the woman herself died. Now in this 'resurrection,' whose wife will she be of these seven men - for she belonged to all of them?"

"You are very wide of the mark, for you are ignorant of both the scriptures and the power of God. For in the resurrection there is no such thing as marrying or being given in marriage - men live like the angels in Heaven. And as for the matter of the resurrection of the dead, haven't you ever read what was once said to you by God himself, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob?' God is not God of the dead but of living men!"

Another of the Pharisees tested Jesus with a question: "Master, what are we to consider the Law's greatest commandment?"

"'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And there is a second like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' The whole of the Law and the Prophets depends on these two commandments."

Then Jesus asked a question.

"What is your opinion about Christ? Whose son is he?"

"The Son of David," they answered.

"How then does David when inspired by the Spirit call him Lord? He says - 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool?' If David then calls him Lord, how can he be his son?"

Then Jesus addressed the crowds and his disciples.

"The scribes and the Pharisees speak with the authority of Moses, so you must do what they tell you and follow their instructions. But you must not imitate their lives! For they preach but do not

practice. They pile up back-breaking burdens and lay them on other men's shoulders - yet they themselves will not raise a finger to move them. Their whole lives are planned with an eye to effect. They increase the size of their phylacteries and lengthen the tassels of their robes; they love seats of honor at dinner parties and front places in the synagogues. They love to be greeted with respect in public places and to have men call them 'rabbi!' Don't you ever be called 'rabbi' - you have only one teacher, and all of you are brothers. And don't call any human being 'father' - for you have one Father and he is in Heaven. And you must not let people call you 'leaders' - you have only one leader, Christ! The only 'superior' among you is the one who serves the others. For every man who promotes himself will be humbled, and every man who learns to be humble will find promotion.

"But alas for you, you scribes and Pharisees, play-actors that you are! You lock the door of the kingdom of Heaven in men's faces. You will not go in yourselves; neither will you allow those at the door to go inside.

"Alas for you, you scribes and Pharisees, play-actors! You scour sea and land to make a single convert, and then you make him twice as ripe for destruction as you are yourselves.

"Alas for you, you blind leaders! You say, 'if anyone swears by the Temple it amounts to nothing, but if he swears by the gold of the Temple he is bound by his oath.' You blind fools, which is the more important, the gold or the Temple which sanctifies the gold? And you say, 'If anyone swears by the altar it doesn't matter, but if he swears by the gift placed on the altar he is bound by his oath.' Have you no eyes - which is more important, the gift, or the altar which sanctifies the gift? Any man who swears by the altar is swearing by the altar and whatever is offered upon it; and anyone who swears by the Temple is swearing by the Temple and by him who dwells in it; and anyone who swears by Heaven is swearing by the throne of God and by the one who sits upon that throne.

"Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you utter frauds! For you pay your tithe on mint and aniseed and cumin, and neglect the things which carry far more weight in the Law - justice, mercy and good faith. These are the things you should have observed - without neglecting the others. You call yourselves leaders, and yet you can't see an inch before your noses, for you filter out the mosquito and swallow the camel.

"What miserable frauds you are, you scribes and Pharisees! You clean the outside of the cup and the dish, while the inside is full of greed and self-indulgence. Can't you see, Pharisee? First wash the inside of a cup, and then you can clean the outside.

"Alas for you, you hypocritical scribes and Pharisees! You are like white-washed tombs, which look fine on the outside but inside are full of dead men's bones and all kinds of rotteness. For you appear like good men on the outside - but inside you are a mass of pretense and wickedness.

"What miserable frauds you are, you scribes and Pharisees! You build tombs for the prophets, and decorate monuments for good men of the past, and then say, 'If we had lived in the times of our ancestors we should never have joined in the killing of the prophets.' Yes, 'your ancestors' - that shows you to be sons indeed of those who murdered the prophets. Go ahead then, and finish off what your ancestors tried to do! You serpents, you viper's brood, how do you think you are going to avoid being condemned to the rubbish-heap? Listen to this: I am sending you prophets and wise and learned men; and some of these you will kill and crucify, others you will flog in your synagogues and hunt from town to town. So that on your hands is all the innocent blood spilt on this earth, from the blood of Abel the good to the blood of Zachariah, Barachiah's son, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. Yes, I tell you that all this will be laid at the doors of this generation.

"Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You murder the prophets and stone the messengers that are sent to you. How often have I longed to gather your children round me like a bird gathering her brood together under her wing - and you would never have it. Now all you have left is your house. I tell you that you will never see me again till the day when you cry, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

The disciples came to Jesus and drew his attention to the Temple's buildings.

"You see all these? I tell you every stone will be thrown down till there is not a single one left standing upon another."

Later on the slope of the Mount of Olives his disciples came to him privately and said, "Tell us, when will this happen? What will be the signal for your coming and the end of this world?"

"Be careful that no one misleads you, for many men will come in my name saying 'I am Christ,' and they will mislead many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars - but don't be alarmed. Such things must indeed happen, but that is not the end. For one nation will rise in arms against another, and one kingdom against another, and there will be famines and earthquakes in different parts of the world. But all that is only the beginning of the birth-pangs. For then comes the time when men will hand you over to persecution, and kill you. And all nations will hate you because you bear my name. Then comes the time when many will lose their faith, and will betray and hate each other. Yes and many false prophets will arise and will mislead many people. Because of the spread of wickedness the love of most men will grow cold, though the man who holds out to the end will be saved. This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed to men all over the world as a witness to all the nations, and the end will come.

"When the time comes, then, that you see the 'abomination of desolation' prophesied by Daniel 'standing in the sacred place' - the reader should note this - then is the time for those in Judea to escape to the hills. A man on his house-top must not waste time going into his house to collect anything; a man at work in the fields must not go back home to fetch his clothes. Alas for the pregnant, alas for those with tiny babies at that time! Pray God that you may not have to make your escape in the winter or on the Sabbath day, for then there will be great misery, such as has never happened from the beginning of the world until now, and will never happen again! Yes, if those days had not been cut short no human being would survive. But for the sake of God's people those days are to be shortened.

"If anyone says to you then, 'Look, here is Christ!' or 'There he is!' don't believe it. False Christs and false prophets are going to appear and will produce great signs and wonders to mislead, if it were possible, even God's own people. Listen, I am warning you so that if people say to you, 'There he is, in the desert!' you are not to go out there. If they say, 'Here he is, in this inner room!' don't believe it. For as lightning flashes across from east to west so will the Son of Man's coming be. 'Wherever there is a dead body, there the vultures will flock.'

"Immediately after the misery of those days 'the sun will be darkened, the moon will fail to give her light, the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.' Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will wring their hands as they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky in power and great splendor. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet-call and they will gather his chosen from the four winds - from one end of the heavens to the other.

"Learn what the fig-tree can teach you. As soon as its branches grow full of sap and produce leaves you know that summer is near. So when you see all these things happening, you may

know that he is near, at your very door! Believe me; this generation will not disappear till all this has taken place. Earth and sky will pass away, but my words will never pass away! But about that actual day and time no one knows - not even the angels of Heaven, nor the Son -- only the Father. For just as life went on in the days of Noah so will it be at the coming of the Son of Man. In those days before the flood, people were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage until the very day that Noah went into the ark, and knew nothing about the flood until it came and destroyed them all. So will it be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one is taken and one is left behind. Two women will be grinding at the hand-mill; one is taken and one is left behind.

"You must be on the alert then, for you do not know when your master is coming. You can be sure of this, however, that if the householder had known what time of night the burglar would arrive, he would have been ready for him and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. That is why you must always be ready, for you do not know what time the Son of Man will arrive."

"Who then is the faithful and sensible servant whom his master put in charge of his household to give others their food at the proper time? Well, he is fortunate if his master finds him doing that duty on his return! Believe me; he will promote him to look after all his property. But if he should be a bad servant who says to himself, 'My master takes his time about returning,' and should begin to beat his fellow-servants and eat and drink with drunkards, that servant's master will return suddenly and unexpectedly, and will punish him severely and send him off to share the penalty of the unfaithful - to his bitter sorrow and regret.

"In those days the kingdom of Heaven will be like ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were sensible and five were foolish. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. But the sensible ones brought their lamps and oil in their flasks as well. Then, as the bridegroom was a very long time, they all grew drowsy and fell asleep. But in the middle of the night there came a shout, 'Wake up, here comes the bridegroom! Out you go to meet him!'" Then up got the bridesmaids and attended to their lamps. The foolish ones said to the sensible ones, 'Please give us some of your oil - our lamps are going out!' 'Oh no,' returned the sensible ones, 'there might not be enough for all of us. Better go to the oil-shop and buy some for yourselves.' But while they had gone off to buy the oil the bridegroom arrived, and those bridesmaids who were ready went in with him for the festivities and the door was shut behind them. Later on the rest of the bridesmaids came and said, 'Oh, please, sir, open the door for us!' But he replied, 'I tell you I don't know you!' So be on the alert - for you do not know the day or the time.

"It is just like a man going abroad who called his household servants together before he went and handed his property to them to manage. He gave one five thousand pounds, another two thousand and another one thousand - according to their respective abilities. Then he went away.

"The man who had received five thousand pounds went out at once and by doing business with this sum he made another five thousand. Similarly the man with two thousand pounds made another two thousand. But the man who had received one thousand pounds went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

"Some years later the master of these servants arrived and went into the accounts with them. The one who had the five thousand pounds came in and brought him an additional five thousand with the words, 'You gave me five thousand pounds, sir. Look, I've increased it by another five thousand.' 'Well done!' said his master, 'you're a sound, reliable servant. You've been trustworthy

over a few things, now I'm going to put you in charge of much more. Come in and share your master's rejoicing.'

"Then the servant who had received two thousand pounds came in and said, 'You gave me two thousand pounds, sir. Look, here's two thousand more that I've managed to make by it.' 'Well done!' said his master, 'you're a sound, reliable servant. You've been trustworthy over a few things, now I'm going to put you in charge of many. Come in and share your master's pleasure.'

"Then the man who had received the one thousand pounds came in and said, 'Sir, I always knew you were a hard man, reaping where you never sowed and collecting where you never laid out - so I was scared and I went off and hid your thousand pounds in the ground. Here is your money, intact.'

"'You're a wicked, lazy servant!' his master told him. 'You say you knew that I reap where I never sowed and collect where I never laid out? Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and when I came out I should at any rate have received what belongs to me with interest. Take his thousand pounds away from him and give it to the man who now has the ten thousand!' For the man who has something will have more given to him and will have plenty. But as for the man who has nothing, even his 'nothing' will be taken away. 'Throw this useless servant into the darkness outside, where he can weep and wail over his stupidity.'

"But when the Son of Man comes in his splendor with all his angels with him, then he will take his seat on his glorious throne. All the nations will be assembled before him and he will separate men from each other like a shepherd separating sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left.

"Then the king will say to those on his right 'Come, you who have won my Father's blessing! Take your inheritance - the kingdom reserved for you since the foundation of the world! For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was lonely and you made me welcome. I was naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you came and looked after me. I was in prison and you came to see me there.

"Then the true men will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food? When did we see you thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you lonely and make you welcome, or see you naked and clothe you, or see you ill or in prison and go to see you?'

"And the king will reply, 'I assure you that whatever you did for the humblest of my brothers you did for me.'

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Out of my presence, cursed as you are, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink. I was lonely and you never made me welcome. When I was naked you did nothing to clothe me; when I was sick and in prison you never cared about me.'

"Then they, too, will answer him, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry, or thirsty, or lonely, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and fail to look after you?'

"Then the king will answer them with these words, 'I assure you that whatever you failed to do to the humblest of my brothers you failed to do to me.'

"And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the true men to eternal life."

In Bethany a woman came to Jesus with a flask of expensive perfume and poured it on his head as he was at table. The disciples said to the woman, "What is the point of such wicked waste? Couldn't this perfume have been sold for a lot of money which could be given to the poor?" Jesus knew what they were saying and said:

"Why must you make this woman feel uncomfortable? She has done a beautiful thing for me. You have the poor with you always, but you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she was preparing it for burial. I assure you that wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the whole world, this deed of hers will also be recounted as her memorial to me."

On the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus with the question, "Where do you want us to make our preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

"Go into the city to a certain man there and say to him, 'The Master says, 'My time is near. I am going to keep the Passover with my disciples at your house.'"

The disciples did as Jesus had instructed them and prepared the Passover. Then late in the evening he took his place at table with the twelve and during the meal he said,

"I tell you plainly that one of you is going to betray me."

Each began to say to him in turn, "Surely, Lord, I am not the one?"

"The man who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the man who will betray me. It is true that the Son of Man will follow the road foretold by the scriptures, but alas for the man through whom he is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had never been born."

And Judas said, "Master, am I the one?"

"As you say!"

During the meal Jesus broke a loaf into pieces and gave it to the disciples.

"Take and eat this. It is my body."

Then he took a cup and after thanking God, he gave it to them:

"Drink this, all of you, for it is my blood, the blood of the new covenant shed to set many free from their sins. I tell you I will drink no more wine until I drink it fresh with you in my Father's kingdom."

Then they went out to the Mount of Olives, where Jesus said:

"Tonight every one of you will lose his faith in me. For the scripture says, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have risen I shall go before you into Galilee!"

Peter said, "Even if everyone should lose his faith in you, I never will!"

"I tell you, Peter, that tonight, before the cock crows, you will disown me three times."

Then in Gethsemane, Jesus said to them:

"Sit down here while I go over there and pray."

Peter, John and James went with Jesus, who told them:

"My heart is nearly breaking. Stay here and keep watch with me."

Then he walked on a little way and fell on his face and prayed.

"My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me - yet it must not be what I want, but what you want."

Then he came back to the disciples and found them fast asleep.

"Couldn't you three keep awake with me for a single hour? Watch and pray, all of you, so you may not have to face temptation. Your spirit is willing, but human nature is weak."

Then he went away a second time and prayed.

"My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to pass from me without my drinking it, then your will must be done."

Finding them asleep again, he left and went away to pray for a third time using the same words as before. Then he came back to his disciples and spoke to them:

"Are you still going to sleep and take your ease? In a moment you will see the Son of Man betrayed into the hands of evil men. Wake up, let us be going! Look, here comes my betrayer!"

Judas appeared with a great crowd armed with swords and staves. (He had given them a sign, "The one I kiss will be the man. Get him!") Without any hesitation he walked up to Jesus and kissed him affectionately.

"Judas, my friend, why are you here?"

Then the others seized hold of Jesus and held him. One of Jesus' disciples drew his sword and cut off the ear of one. At this Jesus said to him:

"Put your sword back into its proper place. All those who take the sword die by the sword. Do you imagine that I could not appeal to my Father, and he would at once send more than twelve legions of angels to defend me? But then, how would the scriptures be fulfilled which say that all this must take place?"

And then Jesus spoke to the crowd:

"So you've come out with your swords and staves to capture me like a bandit, have you? Day after day I sat teaching in the Temple and you never laid a finger on me. But all this is happening as the prophets said it would."

During Jesus' trial two men testified, "This man said, 'I can pull down the Temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'" The High Priest asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What about the evidence of these men against you?" But Jesus was silent. Then the High Priest said to him, "I command you by the living God, to tell us on your oath if you are Christ, the Son of God."

"I am. Yes, and I tell you that in the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of Heaven."

Jesus was crucified and died.

When the Sabbath was over, the two Mary's went to the tomb only to find the stone pulled aside, and heard from an angel that Jesus was risen. When leaving in awe, the risen Jesus said to them,

"Peace be with you! Do not be afraid. Go now and tell my brothers to go into Galilee and they shall see me there"

The eleven went to a hillside in Galilee where Jesus came and spoke these words to them:

"All power in Heaven and on earth has been given to me. You, then, are to go and make disciples of all the nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you and remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

II From the Gospel According to Mark

It was after John's arrest that Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the Gospel of God, saying,

"The time has come at last - the kingdom of God has arrived. You must change your hearts and minds and believe the good news."

Jesus saw two fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew, casting their nets into the water.

"Come and follow me, and I will teach you to catch men!"

A leper came to Jesus and appealed to him, "If you want to, you can make me clean." Jesus stretched out his hand and placed it on the leper, saying,

"Of course I want to - be clean!"

At once the leprosy left him and he was quite clean.

"Mind you, say nothing at all to anybody. Go straight off and show yourself to the priest, and make the offerings for your cleansing which Moses prescribed, as public proof of your recovery."

A group of people came to see Jesus in Capernaum, bringing with them a paralytic. When they found it was impossible to get near him because of the crowd, they let down the paralytic's bed through the roof. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic:

"My son, your sins are forgiven."

Some of the scribes were sitting there thinking this was blasphemy for one other than God to forgive sins, and Jesus realized what they were thinking.

"Why must you argue like this in your minds? Which do you suppose is easier - to say to a paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Get up, pick up your bed and walk?' But to prove to you that the Son of Man has full authority to forgive sins on earth, I say to this man, 'Get up, pick up your bed and go home.'"

The man got to his feet, picked up his bed and walked off.

Jesus saw Matthew Levi sitting at his desk in the tax office and said,

"Follow me!"

So Matthew Levi did. When the scribes and Pharisees saw him eating in the company of tax-collectors and outsiders, they remarked, "Why does he eat with tax-collectors and sinners?" Jesus said to them,

"It is not the fit and flourishing who need the doctor, but those who are ill. I did not come to invite the 'righteous,' but the 'sinners.'"

The disciples of John came and said to Jesus, "Why do those who follow John or the Pharisees keep fasts but your disciples do nothing of the kind?"

"Can you expect wedding-guest to fast in the bridegroom's presence? Fasting is out of the question as long as they have the bridegroom with them. But the day will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them - that will be the time for them to fast.

"Nobody sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on to an old coat. If he does, the new patch tears away from the old and the hole is worse than ever. And nobody puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine bursts the skins, the wine is spilt and the skins are ruined. No, new wine must go into new wineskins."

Jesus and the disciples were going through cornfields on the Sabbath day and his disciples began to pick the ears of corn. The Pharisees said, "Why should they work, which is forbidden on the Sabbath day?"

"Have you never read what David did, when he and his companions were hungry? Haven't you read how he went into the house of God when Abiathar was High Priest, and ate the presentation loaves, which nobody is allowed to eat except the priests - and gave some of the bread to his companions?"

The Sabbath was made for man's sake; man was not made for the sake of the Sabbath. That is why the Son of Man is master even of the Sabbath."

At the synagogue Pharisees waited to see what Jesus would do on the Sabbath with a man who had a shriveled hand. Jesus said to the man:

"Stand up and come out here in front!"

Then he said to the Pharisees:

"Is it right to do good on the Sabbath day, or to do harm? Is it right to save life or to kill?"

In response to the silence, Jesus said to the man,

"Stretch out your hand!"

The hand was restored.

Scribes who had come down from Jerusalem were saying that Jesus drove out devils because he was in league with the prince of devils.

"How can Satan be the one who drives out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, it cannot last either. And if Satan leads a rebellion against Satan, his days are certainly numbered. No one

can break into a strong man's house and steal his property, without first tying up the strong man hand and foot. But if he did that, he could ransack the whole house.

A woman who had a hemorrhage came up behind Jesus and touched his cloak. The hemorrhage stopped immediately, and she knew in herself that she was cured of her trouble. At once Jesus knew power had gone out of him, and he said,

"Who touched my clothes?"

The woman flung herself in fear before him and told him the whole story.

"Daughter, it is your faith that has healed you. Go home in peace, and be free from your trouble."

While he was still speaking, messengers arrived saying to the leader of the synagogue, "Your daughter is dead - there is no need to bother the master any further." Jesus said, "Now don't be afraid, just go on believing!"

Peter, James and John followed Jesus to the man's house and in the midst of people weeping and wailing, Jesus said,

"Why are you making such a noise with your crying? The child is not dead; she is fast asleep."

The people did not believe him, but Jesus had them leave and took the father and mother and his companions into the room where the child was. Then he took the little girl's hand and said to her,

"Little girl, I tell you to get up!"

She got to her feet and walked around the room.

Jesus was approached by the Pharisees who said to him, "Why do your disciples refuse to follow the ancient tradition, and eat their bread with 'common' hands instead of washing?"

"You hypocrites, Isaiah described you beautifully when he wrote - 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' You are so busy holding on to the traditions of men that you let go the commandment of God!"

"It is interesting to see how you can set aside the commandment of God to preserve your own tradition! For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother' and 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'if a man says to his father or his mother, 'I have given God whatever duty I owed to you,' then he need not lift a finger any longer for his father or mother, so making the word of God invalid for the sake of the tradition which you hold. And this is typical of much of what you do."

Then he spoke to all in the crowd, saying:

"Listen to me now, all of you, and understand this, There is nothing outside a man which can enter into him and make him 'common.' It is the things which come out of a man that make him 'common.'"

Later his disciples asked him about this again.

"Can't you see that anything that goes into a man from outside cannot make him 'common' or unclean? You see, it doesn't go into his heart, but into his stomach, and passes out of the body altogether, so that all food is clean enough. But whatever comes out of a man -- that is what makes a man 'common' or unclean. For it is from inside, from men's hearts and minds, that evil thoughts arise. Lust, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, arrogance and folly -- all these evil things come from inside a man and make him unclean!"

A large crowd had collected and had nothing to eat.

"My heart goes out to this crowd; they have been with me three days now and they have no food left. If I send them off home without anything they will collapse on the way, and some of them have come from a distance."

His disciples replied, "Where could anyone find the food to feed them here in this deserted spot?"

"How many loaves have you got?"

"Seven," they replied. So Jesus blessed the bread, and some fishes, too, and the multitudes were fed with plenty of food to spare.

The Pharisees wanted a sign from Heaven.

"What makes this generation want a sign? I can tell you this -- they will certainly not be given one!"

Then he left them and boarded a boat with his disciples to cross the lake. The disciples had forgotten to take any food and had only one loaf with them in the boat.

"Keep your eyes open! Be on your guard against the 'yeast' of the Pharisees and the 'yeast' of Herod!"

This sent them into a discussion of not having bread.

"Why all this discussion about bringing no bread? Don't you understand or grasp what I say even yet? Are you like the people who, having eyes, do not see, and having ears, do not hear? Have you forgotten -- when I broke five loaves for five thousand people, how many baskets full of pieces did you pick up?"

"Twelve," they replied.

"And then there were seven loaves for four thousand people, how many baskets of pieces did you pick up?"

"Seven," they said.

"And does that still mean nothing to you?"

"Who are men saying that I am?"

"John the Baptist," they answered. "But others say that you are Elijah or some say one of the prophets."

"But what about you -- who do you say that I am?"

"You are Christ!" answered Peter. And Jesus began to teach them that it was inevitable that the Son of Man should go through much suffering and be utterly repudiated by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed. This made Peter draw him on one side and take him to task about what he had said.

"Out of my way, Satan! Peter, you are not looking at things from God's point of view, but from man's!"

Then he called his disciples and the people around him.

"If anyone wants to follow in my footsteps, he must give up all right to himself, take up his cross and follow me. The man who tries to save his life will lose it. It is the man who loses his life for my sake and the sake of the Gospel who will save it. What good can it do a man to gain the whole world at the price of his own soul? What can a man offer to buy back his soul once he has lost it? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this unfaithful and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in the Father's glory with the holy angels around him. Believe me, there are some of you standing here who will know nothing of death until you have seen the kingdom of God coming in its power!"

Then they asked him this question, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come before Christ?"

"It is quite true that Elijah does come first, and begins the restitution of all things. But what does the scripture say about the Son of Man? That he must go through much suffering and be treated with contempt! I tell you that not only has Elijah come already but they have done to him exactly what they wanted - just as the scripture says of him."

As they came to Capernaum, Jesus asked the disciples,

"What were you discussing as we came along?"

They were silent, for they had been arguing about who should be the greatest. Jesus sat down with them.

"If any man wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all."

Then Jesus took a little child and said,

"Anyone who welcomes one little child like this for my sake is welcoming me. And the man who welcomes me is welcoming not only me but the one who sent me!"

John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw somebody driving out evil spirits in your name, and we stopped him, for he is not one who follows us."

"You must not stop him. No one who exerts such power in my name would readily say anything against me. For the man who is not against us is on our side. In fact, I assure you that the man who gives you a mere drink of water in my name, because you are followers of mine, will most certainly be rewarded. And I tell you too, that the man who disturbs the faith of one of the humblest of those who believe in me would be better off if he were thrown into the sea with a great mill-stone hung round his neck! Indeed, if it is your own hand that spoils your faith, you must cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than to keep both your hands and go to the rubbish heap. If your foot spoils your faith, you must cut it off. It is better to enter life on one foot than to keep both your feet and be thrown on to the rubbish heap. And if your eye leads you astray, pluck it out. It is better for you to go one-eyed into the kingdom of God than to keep both eyes and be thrown on to the rubbish heap, where 'their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.' For everyone will be salted by fire. Salt is a very good thing; but if it should lose its saltiness, what can you do to restore its flavor? You must have salt in yourselves, and live at peace with each other."

Pharisees asked Jesus, "Is it right for a man to divorce his wife?"

"What has Moses commanded you to do?"

"Moses allows men to write a divorce notice and then to dismiss her," they said.

"Moses gave you that commandment because you know so little of the meaning of love. But from the beginning of creation, God 'made them male and female.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh so that in body they are no longer two people but one. That is why man must never separate what God has joined together."

His disciples questioned him again about this matter.

"Any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against his wife. And if she herself divorces her husband and marries someone else, she commits adultery."

Some people came bringing little children for Jesus to touch. The disciples tried to discourage them.

"You must let little children come to me; never stop them! For the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Indeed, I assure you that the man who does not accept the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

A man came running up and fell at his feet, and asked him, "Good Master, what must I do to be sure of eternal life?"

"I wonder why you call me good. No one is good - only God. You know the commandments, 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and your mother.'"

"Master," he replied, "I have kept carefully all these since I was quite young."

"There is one thing you still want. Go and sell everything you have, give the money away to the poor - you will have riches in Heaven. And then come back and follow me."

At these words his face fell and he went away in deep distress, for he was very rich.

"How difficult it is for those who have great possessions to enter the kingdom of God! Children, you don't know how hard it can be to get into the kingdom of Heaven. Why, a camel could more easily squeeze through the eye of a needle than a rich man get into the kingdom of God."

Peter said, "But look, we have left everything and followed you!"

"I promise you, nobody leaves home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or property for my sake and the Gospel's without getting back a hundred times over, though not without persecution - and in the next world eternal life. But many who are first now will then be last, and the last now will then be first."

They were now on their way up to Jerusalem and Jesus took the twelve aside and began to tell them what was going to happen.

"We are now going up to Jerusalem, as you can see. And the Son of Man will be betrayed into the power of the chief priests and scribes. They are going to condemn him to death and hand him over to pagans who will jeer at him and spit at him and flog him and kill him. But after three days he will rise again."

Then Zebedee's two sons James and John approached him, saying "Master, we want you to grant us a special request to sit one on each side of you in the glory of your kingdom!"

"You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I have to drink? Can you go through the baptism I have to bear?"

"Yes, we can."

"You will indeed drink the cup I am drinking, and you will undergo the baptism which I have to bear! But as for sitting on either side of me, that is not for me to give. Such places belong to those for whom they are intended."

When the others heard about this, they began to be highly indignant with James and John.

"You know that the so-called rulers in the heathen world lord it over them, and their great men have absolute power. But it must not be so among you. No, whoever among you wants to be great must become the servant of all, and if he wants to be first among you he must be the slave of all men! For the Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life to set many others free."

When they were approaching Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage and Bethany, he sent off two of his disciples with these instructions,

"Go into the village just ahead of you and as soon as you enter it you will find a tethered colt on which no one has yet ridden. Untie it, and bring it here. If anybody asks you, 'Why are you doing this?,' just say, 'The Lord needs it, and will send it back immediately.'"

Then they came into Jerusalem and Jesus went into the Temple and began to drive out those who were buying and selling there.

"Doesn't the scripture say, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.?' But you have turned it into a 'den of thieves!'"

When they were coming to Jerusalem, they happened upon a fig tree which had no fruit, and Jesus declared that it would never produce fruit again. Another time they were walking along and noticed the fig-tree had withered away to the roots. Peter said, "Master, look, the fig-tree that you cursed is all shriveled up!"

"Have faith in God. I tell you that if anyone should say to this hill, 'Get up and throw yourself into the sea' and without any doubt in his heart believe that what he says will happen, then it will happen! That is why I tell you that whatever you pray about and ask for, if you believe that you have received it, it will be yours. And whenever you stand praying, you must forgive anything that you are holding against anyone else, and your Heavenly Father will forgive you your sins."

In the Temple, the chief priests, elders and scribes approached him, and asked, "What authority do you have for what you're doing? Who gave you permission to do these things?"

"I am going to ask you a question and if you answer me, I will tell you what authority I have for what I do. The baptism of John -- did it come from Heaven or was it purely human? Tell me that."

They were frightened of the people, since all of them believed that John was a real prophet and didn't know what to say, so they answered Jesus, "We do not know."

"Then I cannot tell you by what authority I do these things."

Then he began to talk to them.

"A man once planted a vineyard, fenced it round, dug out the hole for the wine-press and built a watch-tower. Then he let it out to some farm-workers and went abroad. At the end of the season he sent a servant to the tenants to receive his share of the vintage. But they got hold of him, knocked him about and sent him off empty-handed. The owner tried again. He sent another servant to them, but this one they knocked on the head and generally insulted. Once again he sent them another servant, but him they murdered. He sent many others and some they beat up and some they murdered. He had one man left - his own son who was very dear to him. He sent him last of all to the tenants, saying to himself, 'They will surely respect my own son.' But they said to each other, 'this fellow is the future owner. Come on, let's kill him and the property will be ours! So they got hold of him and murdered him, and threw his body out of the vineyard. What do you suppose the owner of the vineyard is going to do? He will come and destroy the men who were working his vineyard and will hand it over to others. Have you never read this scripture - 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'"

Is it right to pay tribute to Caesar or not: are we to pay or not to pay?"

"Why try this trick on me? Bring me a coin and let me look at it."

So they brought one to him.

"Whose face is this and whose name is in the inscription?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

"Then give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God!"

12:18-23 - Then some of the Sadducees asked, "Master, Moses instructed us that if a man's brother dies leaving a widow but no child, then the man should marry the woman and raise children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers, and the first one married and died without leaving issue. Then the second one married the widow and died leaving no issue behind him. The same thing happened with the third, and indeed the whole seven died without leaving any child behind them. Finally the woman died. Now in this 'resurrection,' when men will rise up again, whose wife is she going to be - for she was the wife of all seven of them?"

"Does not this show where you go wrong and how you fail to understand both the scriptures and the power of God? When people rise from the dead they neither marry nor are they given in marriage; they live like the angels in Heaven. But as for this matter of the dead being raised, have you never read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God spoke to him in these words, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?' God is not God of the dead but of living men! That is where you make your great mistake!"

Then one of the scribes asked, "What are we to consider the greatest commandment of all?"

"The first and most important one is this, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these."

Later, while Jesus was teaching in the Temple he remarked,

"How can the scribes make out that Christ is David's son, for David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.' David is himself calling Christ 'Lord' - where do they get the idea that he is his son? Be on your guard against these scribes who love to walk about in long robes and to be greeted respectfully in public and to have the front seats in the synagogue and the best places at dinner parties! These are the men who grow fat on widow's property and cover up what they are doing by making lengthy prayers. They are only adding to their own punishment!"

Jesus watched the people putting their money into an alms box at the temple. A great many rich people put in large sums. Then a poor widow came up and dropped in two little coins and Jesus said to his disciples,

"Believe me; this poor widow has put in more than all the others. For they have all put in what they can easily afford, but she in her poverty who needs so much, has given away everything, her whole living!"

As Jesus was leaving the Temple, one of his disciples said, "Look, Master, what wonderful stonework, what a size these building are!"

"You see these great buildings? Not a single stone will be left standing on another; every one will be thrown down!"

Later on the Mount of Olives, Peter, James, John and Andrew said, "Tell us, when these things will happen. What sign will there be that all these things are going to be accomplished?"

"Be very careful that no one deceives you. Many are going to come in my name and say, 'I am he,' and will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, don't be alarmed. Such things are bound to happen, but the end is not yet. Nation will take up arms against nation and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in different places and terrible famines. But this is only the beginnings of the pains. You yourselves must keep your wits about you, for men will hand you over to their councils, and will beat you in their synagogues. You will have to stand in front of rulers and kings for my sake to bear your witness to them. Before the end comes the Gospel must be proclaimed to all nations. But when they are taking you off to trial, do not worry beforehand about what you are going to say. Simply say the words you are given when the time comes. For it is not really you who will speak, but the Holy Spirit.

"A brother is going to betray his own brother to death, and a father his own child. Children will stand up against their parents and condemn them to death. There will come a time when the whole world will hate you because you are known as my followers. Yet the man who holds out to the end will be saved.

"But when you see 'the abomination of desolation' standing where it ought not then those who are in Judea must fly to the hills! The man on his house top must not go down nor go into his house to fetch anything out of it, and the man in the field must not turn back to fetch his coat. Alas for the women who are pregnant at that time, and alas for those with babies at their breasts! Pray God that it may not be winter when that time comes, for there will be such utter misery in those days as had never been from the creation until now and never will be again. Indeed, if the Lord did not shorten those days, no human beings could survive. But for the sake of the people whom he has chosen he has shortened those days.

"If anyone tells you at that time, 'Look, here is Christ,' or 'Look, there he is,' don't believe it! For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will perform signs and wonders to deceive, if it be possible, even the men of God's choice. You must keep your eyes open! I am giving you this warning before it happens.

"But when that misery is past, 'the light of the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give her light. Stars will be falling from the sky and the powers of heaven will rock on their foundations.' Then men shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send out his angels to summon his chosen together from every quarter, from furthest earth to highest heaven.

"Let the fig-tree illustrate this for you. When its branches grow tender and produce leaves, you know that summer is near at your very doors! I tell you that this generation will not have passed until all these things have come true. Earth and sky will pass away, but what I have told you will never pass away! But no one knows the day or the hour of this happening, not even the angels in

Heaven, no, not even the Son - only the Father. Keep your eyes open, keep on the alert, for you do not know when the time will be.

"It is as if a man who is traveling abroad had left his house and handed it over to be managed by his servants. He has given each one his work to do and has ordered the doorkeeper to be on the look-out for his return. Just so, must you keep a look-out, for you do not know when the master of the house will come - it might be late evening, or midnight, or cock-crow, or early morning - otherwise he might come unexpectedly and find you sound asleep. What I am saying to you I am saying to all; keep on the alert!"

One day, a woman approached Jesus with expensive perfume and poured the perfume on Jesus' head. Some of those present said, "What is the point of such wicked waste of perfume? It could have been sold for over thirty pounds and the money could have been given to the poor."

"Let her alone, why must you make her feel uncomfortable? She has done a beautiful thing for me. You have the poor with you always and you can do good to them whenever you like, but you will not always have me. She has done all she could - for she has anointed my body in preparation for burial. I assure you that wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the whole world, this deed of hers will also be recounted, as her memorial to me."

III From the Gospel According to Luke

As a child, Jesus was separated from his parents in Jerusalem and when they finally found him, Jesus said,

"But why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

"If you really are the Son of God," the devil said to Jesus, "tell this stone to turn into a loaf."

"The scripture says, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"

Then the devil showed him all the kingdoms of mankind in a vision, and said, "I will give you all this power and magnificence if you will fall down and worship me."

"It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only you shall serve.'"

Then the devil set him on the highest ledge of the Temple in Jerusalem. "If you really are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for the scripture says that God's angels will protect you and hold you up from any harm."

"It is also said, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'"

When Jesus returned to Nazareth and spoke at the synagogue on the Sabbath, he read from the book of Isaiah.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Then he shut the book and resumed his seat, but since every eye was looking at him, he said, "This very day this scripture has been fulfilled, while you were listening to it!"

People marveled and said, "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

"I expect you will quote this proverb to me -- 'Cure yourself, doctor!' Let us see you do in your own country all that we have heard that you did in Capernaum! I assure you that no prophet is ever welcomed in his own country. I tell you the plain fact that in Elijah's time, when the heavens were shut up for three and a half years and there was a great famine through the whole country, there were plenty of widows in Israel, but Elijah was not sent to any of them. But he was sent to Sarepta, a widow in the country of Sidon. In the time of Elisha the prophet, there were a great many lepers in Israel, but not one of them was healed -- only Naaman, the Syrian." A man in the synagogue under the influence of some evil spirit yelled, "What have you got to do with us, Jesus, you Nazarene? Have you come to kill us? I know who you are. You're God's holy one!" To which Jesus said,

"Be quiet! Get out of him!"

One day Jesus saw two boats on the shore by the lake. He went aboard one of the boats, which belonged to Simon, and asked him to push out a little from the shore, so he could teach the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said,

"Push out now into deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

Simon replied, "We've worked all night and never caught a thing, but if you say so, I'll let the nets down." And when they had done this, they caught an enormous shoal of fish. Simon fell on his knees before Jesus and said, "Keep away from me, Lord, for I'm only a sinful man!"

"Don't be afraid, Simon. From now on your catch will be men."

Some men arrived to see Jesus, carrying a paralytic, and due to the crowds, finally had him lowered through the roof on his bed. When Jesus saw this, he said:

"My friend, your sins are forgiven."

The scribes and the Pharisees began to argue about this, saying, "Who is this man who talks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins? Only God can do that."

"Why must you argue like this in your minds? Which do you suppose is easier - to say, 'Your sins are forgiven' or to say, 'Get up and walk?' But to make you realize that the Son of Man has full authority on earth to forgive sins - I tell (this man) to get up, pick up your bed and go home!"

To which the man responded, by getting up and taking his bed home.

Then Matthew Levi gave a big reception for Jesus in his own house, where a great crowd of tax-collectors and others came. The Pharisees and scribes kept muttering indignantly about this, saying, "Why do you have your meals with tax-collectors and sinners?"

"It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but those who are ill. I have not come to invite the righteous, but the sinners, to change their ways."

Then people said to him, "Why is it that John's disciples are always fasting and praying, just like the Pharisees' disciples, but yours both eat and drink?"

"Can you expect wedding-guests to fast while they have the bridegroom with them? The day will come when they will lose the bridegroom; that will be the time for them to fast!"

"Nobody tears a piece from a new coat to patch up an old one. If he does, he ruins the new one and the new piece does not match the old."

"Nobody puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins - the wine will be spilt and the skins ruined. No, new wine must be put into new wineskins. Of course, nobody who has been drinking old wine will want the new at once. He is sure to say, 'The old is a good sound wine.'"

On a Sabbath day, the disciples began picking ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them as they were going through a corn field. Some of the Pharisees remarked, "Why are you doing what the Law forbids men to do on the Sabbath day?"

"Have you never read what David and his companions did when they were hungry? How he went into the house of God, took the presentation loaves, ate some bread himself and gave some to his companions, even though the Law does not permit anyone except the priests to eat it? The Son of Man is master even of the Sabbath."

On another Sabbath day when Jesus went into a synagogue to teach, there was a man there whose right hand was wasted away. The scribes and the Pharisees were watching Jesus closely to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath day. Jesus knew what was going on in their minds when he asked the man to come out front. Then Jesus said to the Pharisees and scribes,

"I am going to ask you a question. Does the Law command us to do good on Sabbath days or do harm - to save life or destroy it?"

He looked round at the silent crowd and said to the man,

"Now stretch out your hand."

The man did so, and his hand was restored as sound as the other one.

The day came to be about God's work, so Jesus took his disciples aside and spoke to them.

"How happy are you who own nothing, for the kingdom of God is yours!"

"How happy are you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied!"

"How happy are you who weep now, for you are going to laugh!"

"How happy you are when men hate you and turn you out of their company; when they slander you and detest all that you stand for because you are loyal to the Son of Man. Be glad when that happens and jump for joy - your reward in Heaven is magnificent. For that is exactly how their fathers treated the prophets.

"But how miserable for you who are rich, for you have had all your comforts! How miserable for you who have all you want, for you are going to be hungry! How miserable for you who are laughing now, for you will know sorrow and tears! How miserable for you when everybody says nice things about you, for that is exactly how their fathers treated the false prophets.

"But I say to all of you who will listen to me: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who treat you badly. As for the man who hits you on one cheek, offer him the other one as well! And if a man is taking away your coat, do not stop him from taking your shirt as well. Give to everyone who asks you, and when a man has taken what belongs to you, don't demand it back.

"Treat men exactly as you would like them to treat you. If you love only those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them! And if you do good only to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that, And if you lend only to those from whom you hope to get your money back, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners and expect to get their money back. No, you are to love your enemies and do

good and lend without hope of return. Your reward will be wonderful and you will be sons of the most high. For he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked! You must be merciful, as your father in Heaven is merciful."

"Don't judge other people and you will not be judged yourselves. Don't condemn and you will not be condemned. Make allowances for others and people will make allowances for you. Give and men will give to you - yes, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will they pour into your lap. For whatever measure you use with other people, they will use in their dealings with you."

"Can one blind man be guide to another blind man? Surely they will both fall into the ditch together. A disciple is not above his teacher, but when he is fully trained he will be like his teacher."

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and fail to notice the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye' when you cannot see the plank in your own? You fraud, take the plank out of your own eye first and then you can see clearly enough to remove your brother's speck."

"It is impossible for a good tree to produce bad fruit - as impossible as it is for a bad tree to produce good fruit. Do not men know what a tree is by its fruit? You cannot pick figs from briars, or gather a bunch of grapes from a blackberry bush! A good man produces good things from the good stored up in his heart, and a bad man produce evil things from his own stores of evil. For a man's words will always express what has been treasured in his heart."

"And what is the point of calling me, 'Lord, Lord,' without doing what I tell you to do? Let me show you what the man who comes to me, hears what I have to say, and puts it into practice, is really like. He is like a man building a house, who dug down to rock-bottom and laid the foundation of his house upon it. Then when the flood came and flood-water swept down upon that house, it could not shift it because it was properly built. But the man who hears me and does nothing about it is like a man who built his house with its foundation upon the soft earth. When the flood-water swept down upon it, it collapsed and the whole house crashed down in ruins."

Not long afterwards, Jesus went into a town where people were carrying out a dead man, the only son of his widowed mother. When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her.

"Don't cry."

Then he walked up and put his hands on while the bearers stood still.

"Young man, wake up!"

And the man sat up and began to talk.

John's disciples came to Jesus and said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you with this message, 'Are you the one who was to come, or are we to look for someone else?'"

"Go and tell John what you have seen and heard. The blind are recovering their sight, cripples are walking again, lepers being healed, the deaf hearing, dead men are being brought to life

again, and the good news is being given to those in need. And happy is the man who never loses his faith in me."

When these messengers had gone back, Jesus began to talk to the crowd about John.

"What did you go out into the desert to look at? Was it a reed waving in the breeze? Well, what was it you went out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? But the men who wear fine clothes live luxuriously in palaces. But what did you really go to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, a prophet and far more than a prophet! This is the man of whom the scripture says, 'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.' Believe me, no one greater than John has ever been born, and yet a humble member of the kingdom of God is greater than he.

"All the people, yes, even the tax-collectors, when they heard John, acknowledged God and were baptized by his baptism. But the Pharisees and the experts in the Law frustrated God's purpose for them, for they refused John's baptism.

"What can I say that the men of this generation are like - what sort of men are they? They are like children sitting in the market-place and calling out to each other, 'We played at weddings for you, but you wouldn't dance, and we played at funerals for you, and you wouldn't cry!' For John the Baptist came in the strictest austerity and you say he is crazy. Then the Son of Man came, enjoying life, and you say, 'Look, a drunkard and a glutton, a bosom-friend of the tax-collector and the outsider!' Ah, well, wisdom's reputation is entirely in the hands of her children!"

When Jesus came into the house of a Pharisee named Simon, a woman came to Jesus crying, tears falling on his feet and then she dried them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with perfume. The Pharisee recoiled. "If this man were really a prophet, he would know who this woman is and would have realized that she is a bad woman."

"Once upon a time, there were two men in debt to the same money-lender. One owed him fifty pounds and the other five. And since they were unable to pay, he generously cancelled both of their debts. Now, which one of them do you suppose will love him more?"

"Well," returned Simon, "I suppose it will be the one who has been more generously treated."

"Exactly! You can see this woman? I came into your house but you provided no water to wash my feet. But she has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. There was no warmth in your greeting, but she, from the moment I came in, has not stopped covering my feet with kisses. You gave me no oil for my head, but she has put perfume on my feet. That is why I tell you, Simon, that her sins, many as they are, are forgiven; for she has shown me so much love. But the man who has little to be forgiven has only a little love to give."

And the men wondered, "And who is this man, who even forgives sins?" But Jesus said to the woman,

"It is your faith that has saved you. Go in peace."

When a large crowd had collected of people coming to him from one town after another, Jesus spoke to them:

"A sower went out to sow his seed, and while he was sowing, some of the seed fell by the roadside and was trodden down and birds gobbled it up. Some fell on the rock, and when it sprouted it withered for lack of moisture. Some fell among thorn-bushes which grew up with the seeds and choked the life out of them. But some seed fell on good soil and grew and produced a crop - a hundred times what had been sown. Let the man who has ears to hear use them!"

Then his disciples asked him the meaning of the parable.

"You have been given the chance to understand the secrets of the kingdom of God, but the others are given parables so that they may go through life with their eyes open and 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'"

"This is what the parable means. The seed is the message of God. The seed sown by the roadside represents those who hear the message, and then the devil comes and takes it away from their hearts so that they cannot believe it and be saved. That sown on the rock represents those who accept the message with great delight when they hear it, but have no real root. They believe for a little while but when the time of temptation comes, they lose faith. And the seed sown among the thorns represents the people who hear the message and go on their way, and with the worries and riches and pleasures of living, the life is choked out of them, and in the end they produce nothing. But the seed sown on good soil means the men who hear the message and accept it with good and honest heart, and go on steadily producing a good crop.

"Nobody lights a lamp and covers it with a basin or puts it under the bed. No, a man puts his lamp on a lamp-stand so that those who come in can see the light. For there is nothing hidden now which will not become perfectly plain and there are no secrets now which will not become as clear as daylight."

"So take care how you listen - more will be given to the man who has something already, but the man who has nothing will lose even what he thinks he has."

Then his mother and his brothers arrived to see him, but could not get near him because of the crowd. So a message was passed to him, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside wanting to see you."

"My mother and my brothers? That means those who listen to God's message and obey it."

A woman who had a hemorrhage for many years came up behind Jesus one day and touched the edge of his cloak, with the result that her hemorrhage stopped at once.

"Who was that who touched me?"

But no one answered.

"Somebody touched me, for I felt the power went out from me."

The woman finally fell at his feet and admitted before everybody why she touched him.

"Daughter, it is your faith that has healed you - go in peace."

Jesus called the twelve together and sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick, with these words:

"Take nothing for your journey - neither a stick nor a purse nor food nor money, nor even extra clothes! When you come to stay at a house, remain there until you go on your way again. And where they will not welcome you, leave that town, and shake the dust off your feet as a protest against them!"

Jesus spoke to them all.

"If anyone wants to follow in my footsteps, he must give up all right to himself, carry his cross every day and keep close behind me. For the man who wants to save his life will lose it, but the man who loses his life for my sake will save it. For what is the use of a man gaining the whole world if he loses or forfeits his own soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him, when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and the holy angels. I tell you the simple truth - there are men standing here today who will not taste death until they have seen the kingdom of God!"

An argument arose among the apostles as to who should be the greatest, and Jesus took a little child and made him stand by his side.

"Anyone who accepts a little child in my name is really accepting me, and the man who accepts me is really accepting the one who sent me. It is the humblest among you all who is really the greatest."

Then John spoke. "Master, we saw a man driving out evil spirits in your name, but we stopped him, for he is not one of us who follow you."

"You must not stop him. The man who is not against you is on your side."

As the company made its way, a man said to Jesus, "I'm going to follow you wherever you go."

"Foxes have earths, birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere that he can call his own."

And to another, Jesus said,

"Follow me."

And the man replied, "Let me go and bury my father first."

"Leave the dead to bury their own dead. You must come away and preach the kingdom of God."

And another man said, "I am going to follow you, Lord, but first let me bid farewell to my people at home."

"Anyone who puts his hand to the plough and then looks behind him is useless for the kingdom of God."

Jesus commissioned seventy other disciples and sent them off in pairs into every town and district where he intended to go, telling them,

"There is a great harvest, but only a few are working in it - which means you must pray to the Lord of the harvest that he will send out more reapers. Now go on your way. I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Don't carry a purse or a pair of shoes, and don't stop to pass the time of day with anyone you meet on the road. When you go into a house, say first of all, 'Peace be to this household!' If there is a lover of peace there, he will accept your words of blessing, and if not, they will come back to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink whatever they put before you - a workman deserves his wages. But don't move from one house to another.

"Whatever town you go into and the people welcome you, eat the meals they give you and heal the people who are ill there. Tell them, 'The kingdom of God is very near to you now.' But whenever you come into a town and they will not welcome you, you must go into the streets and say, 'We brush off even the dust of your town from our feet as a protest against you. But it is still true that the kingdom of God has arrived! I assure you that it will be better for Sodom in 'that day' than for that town.

"Alas for you, Chorazin, and alas for you, Bethsaida! For if Tyre and Sidon had seen the demonstrations of God's power that you have seen, they would have repented long ago and sat in sackcloth and ashes. It will be better for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you! As for you, Capernaum, are you on your way up to heaven? I tell you, you will go hurtling down among the dead!

"Whoever listens to you is listening to me, and the man who has no use for you has no use for me either. And the man who has no use for me has no use for the one who sent me!"

Later the seventy came back full of joy. "Lord, even evil spirits obey us when we use your name!"

"Yes, I was watching and saw Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning! It is true that I have given you the power to tread on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the enemy's power. There is nothing at all that can do you any harm. Yet it is not your power over evil spirits which should give such joy, but the fact that your names are written in Heaven.

"O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, I thank you for hiding these things from the clever and the intelligent and for showing them to mere children! Yes, I thank you, Father, that this was your will. Everything has been put in my hands by my Father; and nobody knows who the Son really is except the Father. Nobody knows who the Father really is except the Son and the man to whom the Son chooses to reveal him!

"How fortunate you are to see what you are seeing! I tell you that many prophets and kings have wanted to see what you are seeing but they never saw it, and to hear what you are hearing but they never heard it."

One of the experts in the Law stood up to test him and said, "Master, what must I do to be sure of eternal life?"

"What does the Law say and what has your reading taught you?"

"The Law says, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and your neighbor as yourself.'"

"Quite right. Do that and you will live."

"But who is my 'neighbor?'"

"A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho. He fell into the hands of bandits who stripped off his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead. It so happened that a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. A Levite also came on the scene and when he saw him, he too passed by on the other side. But then a Samaritan traveler came along to the place where the man was lying, and at the sight of him he was touched with pity. He went across to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put him on his own mule, brought him to an inn and did what he could for him. Next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the inn-keeper with the words, 'Look after him, will you? I will pay you back whatever more you spend, when I come through here on my return.' Which of these three seems to you to have been a neighbor to the bandits' victim?"

"The man who gave him practical sympathy."

"Then you go and give the same."

Jesus came to the home of Martha and Mary, where Martha was caught up in preparations and Mary sat with Jesus listening to him. Martha said, "Don't you mind that my sister has left me to do everything by myself? Tell her to get up and help me!"

"Martha, my dear, you are worried and bothered about providing so many things. Only a few things are really needed, perhaps only one. Mary has chosen the best part and you must not tear it away from her!"

One of the disciples said to Jesus one day, "Teach us how to pray, as John used to teach his disciples."

"When you pray, you should say, 'Father, may your name be honored - may your kingdom come! Give us each day the bread we need, and forgive us our sins, for we forgive anyone who owes anything to us; and keep us clear of temptation.'"

And then he said to the disciples,

"If any of you has a friend, and goes to him in the middle of the night and says, 'Lend me three loaves, my dear fellow, for a friend of mine has just arrived after a journey and I have no food to put in front of him;' and then he answers from inside the house, 'Don't bother me with your troubles. The front door is locked and my children and I have gone to bed. I simply cannot get up now and give you anything!' Yet, I tell you, that even if he won't get up and give him what he wants simply because he is his friend, yet if he persists, he will rouse himself and give him everything he needs."

“And so I tell you, ask and it will be given you, search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you. The one who asks will always receive; the one who is searching will always find, and the door is opened to the man who knocks.”

"Some of you are fathers, and if your son asks you for some fish, would you give him a snake instead, or if he asks you for an egg, would you make him a present of a scorpion? So, if you, for all your evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more likely is it that your Heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Jesus expelled an evil spirit which was preventing a man from speaking, and some were saying, "He expels these spirits because he is in league with Beelzebub, the chief of the evil spirits."

"Any kingdom divided against itself is doomed, and a disunited household will collapse. And if Satan disagrees with Satan, how does his kingdom continue? I know you are saying that I expel evil spirits because I am in league with Beelzebub. But if I do expel devils because I am an ally of Beelzebub, who is your own sons' ally when they do the same thing? They can settle that question for you. But if it is by the finger of God that I am expelling evil spirits, 'then the kingdom of God has swept over you unawares!'

"When a strong man who is armed guards his own house, his property is in peace. But when a stronger man comes and conquers him, he removes all the arms on which he pinned his faith and divides the spoils among his friends. Anyone who is not with me is against me, and the man who does not gather with me is really scattering.

"When the evil spirit comes out of a man, it wanders through waterless places looking for rest, and when it fails to find any, it says, 'I will go back to my house from which I came.' When it arrives, it finds it cleaned and all in order. Then it goes and collects seven other spirits more evil than itself to keep it company, and they all go in and make themselves at home. The last state of that man is worse than the first."

While he was still saying this, a woman called out, "Oh, what a blessing for a woman to have brought you into the world and nursed you!"

"Yes, but a far greater blessing to hear the word of God and obey it."

As people crowded closely around Jesus, he said,

"This is an evil generation! It looks for a sign and it will be given no sign except that of Jonah. Just as Jonah was a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be a sign to this generation. When the judgment comes, the Queen of the South will rise up with the men of this generation and she will condemn them. For she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and there is more than the wisdom of Solomon with you now! The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and will condemn it. For they did repent when Jonah preached to them, and there is something more than Jonah's preaching with you now!

"No one takes a lamp and puts it in a cupboard or under a bucket, but on a lamp-stand, so that those who come in can see the light. The lamp of your body is your eye. When your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light, but when your eye is evil, your whole body is full of darkness. So be very careful that your light never becomes darkness. If your whole body is full

of light, with no part of it in shadow, it will all be radiant. It will be like having a bright lamp to give you light."

Jesus went to dine at the home of a Pharisee, where the Pharisee noted that Jesus didn't wash his hands.

"You Pharisees are fond of cleaning the outside of your cups and dishes, but inside yourselves you are full of greed and wickedness! Have you no sense? Don't you realize that the one who made the outside is the maker of the inside as well? If you would only make the inside clean by doing good to others, the outside things become clean as a matter of course! But alas for you Pharisees, for you pay out your tithe of mint and rue and every little herb, and lose sight of the justice and love of God. Yet these are the things you ought to have been concerned with. It need not mean leaving the lesser duties undone. Yes, alas for you Pharisees, who love the front seats in the synagogues and having men bow down to you in public! Alas for you, for you are like unmarked graves. Men walk over your corruption without knowing it is there."

Then one of the experts in the Law said to him, "Master, when you say things like this, you are insulting us as well."

"Yes, and I do blame you experts in the Law! For you pile up back-breaking burdens for men to bear, but you yourselves will not raise a finger to lift them. Alas for you, for you build memorial tombs for the prophets - the very men whom your fathers murdered. You show clearly enough how you approve your father's actions. They did the actual killing and you put up a memorial to it. That is why the wisdom of God has said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles; some they will kill and some they will persecute!' So that the blood of all the prophets shed from the foundation of the earth, from Abel to Zachariah who died between the altar and the sanctuary, shall be charged to this generation! Alas for you experts in the Law, for you have taken away the key of knowledge. You have never gone within yourselves and you have hindered everyone else who was at the door!"

The crowds had gathered in thousands, so that they were actually treading on each other's toes, and Jesus, speaking primarily to his disciples, said,

luke"Be on your guard against yeast - I mean the yeast of the Pharisees, which is sheer pretense. For there is nothing covered up which is not going to be exposed, nor anything private which is not going to be made public. Whatever you may say in the dark will be heard in daylight, and whatever you whisper within four walls will be shouted from the house-tops. I tell you, as friends of mine, that you need not be afraid of those who can kill the body, but afterwards cannot do anything more. I will show you the only one you need to fear - the one who, after he has killed, has the power to throw you into destruction! Yes, I tell you, it is right to stand in awe of him. The market-price of five sparrows is two farthings, isn't it? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight. Why, the very hairs of your heads are all numbered! Don't be afraid, then; you are worth more than a great many sparrows! I tell you that every man who publicly acknowledges me, I, the Son of Man, will acknowledge in the presence of the angels of God. But the man who publicly disowns me will find himself disowned before the angels of God!

"Anyone who speaks against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but there is no forgiveness for the man who speaks evil against the Holy Spirit. And when they bring you before the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, don't worry as to what defense you are going to put up or what

word you are going to use. For the Holy Spirit will tell you at the time what is the right thing for you to say."

Then someone out of the crowd said to him, "Master, tell my brother to share his legacy with me."

"My dear man, who appointed me a judge or arbitrator in your affairs?"

And then, turning to the disciples, he said,

"Notice that, and be on your guard against covetousness in any shape or form. For a man's real life in no way depends upon the number of his possessions.

"Once upon a time a rich man's farmland produced heavy crops. So he said to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have no room to store this harvest of mine?' Then he said, 'I know what I'll do. I'll pull down my barns and build bigger ones where I can store all my grain and my goods and I can say to my soul, Soul, you have plenty of good things stored up there for years to come. Relax! Eat, drink and have a good time!'

But God said to him, 'You fool, this very night you will be asked for your soul! Then, who is going to possess all that you have prepared?' That is what happens to the man who hoards things for himself and is not rich where God is concerned."

"That is why I tell you, don't worry about life, wondering what you are going to eat. And stop bothering about what clothes you will need. Life is much more important than food, and the body more important than clothes. Think of the ravens. They neither sow nor reap, and they have neither store nor barn, but God feeds them. And how much more valuable do you think you are than birds? Can any of you make yourself an inch taller, however much you worry about it? And if you can't manage a little thing like this, why do you worry about anything else?"

"Think of the wild flowers, and how they neither work nor weave. Yet I tell you that Solomon in all his glory was never arrayed like one of these. If God so clothes the grass, which flowers in the field today and is burnt in the stove tomorrow, is he not much more likely to clothe you? You of little faith, you must not set your heart on what you eat or drink, nor must you live in a state of anxiety. The whole heathen world is busy about getting food and drink, and your Father knows well enough that you need such things. No, set your heart on his kingdom, and your food and drink will come as a matter of course.

"Don't be afraid, you tiny flock! Your Father plans to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give the money away. Get yourselves purses that never grow old, inexhaustible treasure in Heaven, where no thief can ever reach it or moth ever ruin it. For wherever your treasure is, you may be certain that your heart will be there too!"

"You must be ready dressed and have your lamps alight, like men who wait to welcome their lord and master on his return from the wedding-feast, so that when he comes and knocks at the door, they may open it for him at once. Happy are the servants whom their lord finds on the alert when he arrives. I assure you that he will take off his outer clothes, make them sit down to dinner, and come and wait on them. And if he should come just after midnight or in the very early morning, and find them still on the alert, their happiness is assured. But be certain of this, that if the householder had known the time when the burglar would come, he would not have let his house be broken into. So you must be on the alert, for the Son of Man is coming at a time when you may not expect him."

Peter said to him, "Lord, do you mean this parable for us or for everybody?"

"Well, who will be the faithful, sensible steward whom his master will put in charge of his household to give them their supplies at the proper time? Happy is the servant if his master finds him so doing when he returns. I tell you he will promote him to look after all his property. But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master takes his time about returning,' and then begins to beat the men and women servants and to eat and drink and get drunk, that servant's lord and master will return suddenly and unexpectedly, and he will punish him severely and send him to share the penalty of the unfaithful. The slave who knows his master's plan but does not get ready or act upon it will be severely punished, but the servant who did not know the plan, though he has done wrong, will be let off lightly. Much will be expected from the one who has been given much, and the more a man is trusted, the more people will expect of him.

"It is fire that I have come to bring upon the earth - how I could wish it were already ablaze! There is a baptism that I must undergo and how strained I am until it is over!

"Do you think I have come to bring peace on the earth? No, I tell you, not peace, but division! For from now on, there will be five people divided against each other in one house, three against two, and two against three. It is going to be father against son, and son against father, and mother against daughter, and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law!"

"When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once that it is going to rain, and so it does. And when you feel the south wind blowing, you say that it is going to be hot, and so it is. You frauds! You know how to interpret the look of the earth and the sky. Why can't you interpret the meaning of the times in which you live? And why can't you decide for yourselves what is right? For instance, when you are going before the magistrate with your opponent, do your best to come to terms with him while you have the chance, or he may rush you off to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the police officer, and the police officer throw you into prison. I tell you, you will never get out again until you have paid your last farthing."

Some people came up to tell Jesus the story of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with that of their own sacrifices.

"Are you thinking that these Galileans were worse sinners than any other men of Galilee because this happened to them? I assure you that is not so. You will all die just as miserable a death unless your hearts are changed! You remember those eighteen people who were killed at Siloam when the tower collapsed upon them? Are you imagining that they were worse offenders than any of the other people who lived in Jerusalem? I assure you they were not. You will all die as tragically unless your whole outlook is changed!"

"Once upon a time a man had a fig-tree growing in his garden, and when he came to look for the figs, he found none at all. So he said to his gardener, 'Look, I have come expecting fruit on this fig tree for three years running and never found any. Better cut it down. Why should it use up valuable space?' And the gardener replied, 'Master, don't touch it this year till I have had a chance to dig round it and give it a bit of manure. Then, if it bears after that, it will be all right. But if it doesn't, then you can cut it down.'"

When Jesus taught in the Synagogue one Sabbath, a woman who had been ill for many years was bent and unable to stand, so Jesus healed her. The Synagogue president objected and told the congregation, "There are six days in which men may work. Come on one of them and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day!" And Jesus answered,

"You hypocrites, every single one of you unties his ox or his ass from the stall on the Sabbath day and leads him away to water! This woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom you all know Satan has kept bound for eighteen years - surely she should be released from such bonds on the Sabbath day!"

"What is the kingdom of God like? What illustration can I use to make it plain to you? It is like a grain of mustard-seed which a man took and dropped in his own garden. It grew and became a tree and the birds came and nested in its branches.

"What can I say the kingdom of God is like? It is like the yeast which a woman took and covered up in three measures of flour until the whole lot had risen."

On another occasion, someone remarked, "Lord, are only a few men to be saved?"

"You must do your utmost to get in through the narrow door, for many, I assure you, will try to do so and will not succeed, once the master of the house has got up and shut the door. Then you may find yourselves standing outside and knocking at the door crying, 'Lord, please open the door for us.' He will reply to you, 'I don't know who you are or where you come from,' and you will protest, saying, 'we have had meals with you, and you taught in our streets!' Yet he will say to you, 'I tell you I do not know where you have come from. Be off, you scoundrels!' At that time there will be tears and bitter regret - to see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets inside the kingdom of God, and you yourselves excluded, outside! Yes, and people will come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south, and take their seats in the kingdom of God. There are some at the back now who will be in the front then, and there are some in front now who will then be far behind."

Just then some Pharisees arrived to tell him, "You must get right away from here, for Herod intends to kill you."

"Go and tell that fox that today and tomorrow I am expelling evil spirits and continuing my work of healing, and on the third day my work will be finished. But I must journey on today, tomorrow, and the next day, for it would never do for a prophet to meet his death outside Jerusalem!

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you murder the prophets and stone the messengers that are sent to you! How often have I longed to gather your children round me like a bird gathering her brood together under her wings, but you would never have it. Now, all that is left is yourselves, and your house. For I tell you that you will never see me again until the day when you cry, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

One Sabbath day Jesus went to the home of a Pharisee for a meal. There a man was afflicted with dropsy. So Jesus spoke to the scribes and Pharisees and said, "Well, is it right to heal on the Sabbath day or not?"

But there was no reply. So Jesus took the man and healed him and let him go.

"If an ass or a cow belonging to one of you fell into a well, wouldn't you rescue him without the slightest hesitation even though it were the Sabbath?"

Then he gave a little word of advice to the guests when he noticed how they were choosing the best seats.

"When you are invited to a wedding reception, don't sit down in the best seat. It might happen that a more distinguished man than you has also been invited. Then your host might say, 'I am afraid you must give up your seat for this man.' And then, with considerable embarrassment, you will have to sit in the humblest place. No, when you are invited, go and take your seat in an inconspicuous place, so that when your host comes in he may say to you, 'Come on, my dear fellow, we have a much better seat than this for you.' That is the way to be important in the eyes of all your fellow guests! For everyone who makes himself important will become insignificant, while the man who makes himself insignificant will find himself important."

Then, addressing his host, Jesus said,

"When you give a luncheon or a dinner party, don't invite your friends or your brothers or relations or wealthy neighbors, for the chances are they will invite you back, and you will be fully repaid. No, when you give a party, invite the poor, the lame, the crippled and the blind. That way lies real happiness for you. They have no means of repaying you, but you will be repaid when good men are rewarded at the resurrection."

Then one of the guests said, "What happiness for a man to eat a meal in the kingdom of God!"

"Once upon a time, a man planned a big dinner party and invited a great many people. At dinner-time, he sent his servant out to tell those who were invited, 'Please come, everything is ready now.' But they all began to make their excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought some land. I must go and look at it. Please excuse me.' Another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen and am on my way to try them out. Please convey my apologies.' Another one said, 'I have just got married and I am sure you will understand I cannot come.' So the servant returned and reported all this to his master. The master of the house was extremely annoyed and said to his servant, 'Hurry out now into the streets and alleys of the town, and bring here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' Then the servant said, 'I have done what you told me, sir, and there are still empty places.' Then the master replied, 'Now go out to the roads and hedgerows and make them come inside, so that my house may be full. For I tell you that not one of the men I invited shall have a taste of my dinner.'"

As Jesus proceeded on his journey, great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and spoke to them,

"If anyone comes to me without letting go of his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be a disciple of mine. The man who will not take up his cross and follow in my footsteps cannot be my disciple."

"If any of you wanted to build a tower, wouldn't he first sit down and work out the cost of it, to see if he can afford to finish it? Otherwise, when he has laid the foundation and found himself unable to complete the building, everyone who sees it will begin to jeer at him, saying, 'This is the man who started to build a tower but couldn't finish it!'"

"Or, suppose there is a king who is going to war with another king, doesn't he sit down first and consider whether he can engage the twenty thousand of the other king with his own ten thousand? And if he decides he can't, then, while the other king is still a long way off, he sends messengers to him to ask for conditions of peace. So it is with you; only the man who says goodbye to all his possessions can be my disciple."

"Salt is a very good thing, but if salt loses its flavor, what can you use to restore it? It is no good for the ground and no good as manure. People just throw it away. Every man who has ears should use them!"

Now all the tax-collectors and "outsiders" were crowding around to hear what Jesus had to say. The Pharisees and scribes complained, "This man accepts sinners and even eats his meals with them."

"Wouldn't any man among you who owned a hundred sheep, and lost one of them, leave the ninety-nine to themselves in the open, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he will put it on his shoulders with great joy, and as soon as he gets home, he will call his friends and neighbours together. 'Come and celebrate with me,' he will say, 'for I have found that sheep of mine which was lost.' I tell you that it is the same in Heaven - there is more joy over one sinner whose heart is changed than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need for repentance.

"Or if there is a woman who has ten silver coins, if she should lose one, won't she take a lamp and sweep and search the house from top to bottom until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbours together. 'Come and celebrate with me,' she says, 'for I have found that coin I lost.' I tell you, it is the same in Heaven - there is rejoicing among the angels of God over one sinner whose heart is changed."

"Once there was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the property that will come to me.' So he divided up his property between the two of them. Before very long, the younger son collected all his belongings and went off to a foreign land, where he squandered his wealth in the wildest extravagance. And when he had run through all his money, a terrible famine arose in that country, and he began to feel the pinch. Then he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country who sent him out into the fields to feed the pigs. He got to the point of longing to stuff himself with the food the pigs were eating and not a soul gave him anything. Then he came to his senses and cried aloud, 'Why, dozens of my father's hired men have got more food than they can eat and here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go back to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have done wrong in the sight of Heaven and in your eyes. I don't deserve to be called your son any more. Please take me on as one of your hired men.'"

So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still some distance off, his father saw him and his heart went out to him, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. But his son said, 'Father, I have done wrong in the sight of Heaven and in your eyes. I don't deserve to be called your son any more.' 'Hurry!' called out his father to the servants, 'fetch the best clothes and put them on him! Put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet, and get that calf we've fattened and kill it, and we will have a feast and a celebration! For this is my son. I thought he was dead, and he's alive again. I thought I had lost him, and he's found!' And they began to get the festivities going.

"But his elder son was out in the fields, and as he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants across to him and inquired what was the meaning of it all. 'Your brother has arrived, and your father has killed the calf we fattened because he has got him home again safe and sound,' was the reply. The elder son was furious and refused to go inside the house. So his father came outside and called him. Then he burst out, 'Look, how many years have I slaved for you and never disobeyed a single order of yours, and yet you have never given me so much as a young goat, so that I could give my friends a dinner? But when that son

of yours arrives who has spent all your money on prostitutes, for him you kill the calf we've fattened!' But the father replied, 'My dear son, you have been with me all the time and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and show our joy. For this is your brother; I thought he was dead and he's alive. I thought he was lost and he is found!'"

One day Jesus told his disciples:

"Once there was a rich man whose agent was reported to him to be mismanaging his property. So he summoned him and said, 'What's this I hear about you? Give me an account of your stewardship. You're not fit to manage my household any longer.' At this the agent said to himself, 'What am I going to do now that my employer is taking away the stewardship from me? I am not strong enough to dig and I can't sink to begging. Ah, I know what I'll do so that when I lose my position people will welcome me into their homes!' So he sent for each one of his master's debtors. 'How much do you owe my master?' he said to the first. 'A hundred barrels of oil,' he replied. 'Here,' replied the agent, 'take your bill, sit down, hurry up and write in fifty.' Then he said to another, 'And what's the size of your debt?' 'A thousand bushels of wheat,' he replied. 'Take your bill,' said the agent, 'and write in eight hundred.'

"Now the master praised this rascally steward because he had been so careful for his own future. For the children of this world are considerably more shrewd in dealing with their contemporaries than the children of light. Now my advice to you is to use 'money,' tainted as it is, to make yourselves friends, so that when it comes to an end, they may welcome you into eternal habitations.

"The man who is faithful in the little things will be faithful in the big things, and the man who cheats in the little things will cheat in the big things too. So that if you are not fit to be trusted to deal with the wicked wealth of this world, who will trust you with the true riches? And if you are not trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?"

"No servant can serve two masters. He is bound to hate one and love the other, or give his loyalty to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and the power of money at the same time."

Now the Pharisees, who were very fond of money, heard all this with a sneer. But he said to them,

"You are the people who advertise your goodness before men, but God knows your hearts. Remember, there are things men consider perfectly splendid which are detestable in the sight of God!"

"The Law and the Prophets were in force until John's day. From then on the good news of the kingdom of God has been proclaimed and men are forcing their way into it.

"Yet it would be easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for a single point of the Law to become a dead letter."

"Any man who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery. And so does any man who marries the woman who was divorced from her husband."

"There was once a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and lead a life of daily luxury. And there was a poor man called Lazarus who was put down at his gate. He was covered with sores. He used to long to be fed with the scraps from the rich man's table. Yes, and the dogs used to come and lick his sores. Well, it happened that the poor man died, and was carried by the

angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And from among the dead he looked up and saw Abraham a long way away, and Lazarus in his arms. 'Father Abraham!' he cried out, 'please pity me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in agony in these flames.' But Abraham replied, 'Remember, my son, that you used to have the good things in your lifetime, while Lazarus suffered the bad. Now he is being comforted here, while you are in agony. And besides this, a great chasm has been set between you and us, so that those who want to go to you from this side cannot do so, and people cannot come to us from your side.' At this he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house for I have five brothers. He could warn them about all this and prevent their coming to this place of torture.' But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets: they can listen to them.' 'Ah no, father Abraham,' he said, 'if only someone were to go to them from the dead, they would change completely.' But Abraham told him, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they would not be convinced even if somebody were to rise from the dead.'"

"It is inevitable that there should be pitfalls, but alas for the man who is responsible for them! It would be better for that man to have a mill-stone hung round his neck and be thrown into the sea, than that he should trip up one of these little ones. So be careful how you live.

"If your brother offends you, take him to task about it, and if he is sorry, forgive him. Yes, if he wrongs you seven times in one day and turns to you and says, 'I am sorry' seven times, you must forgive him."

And the apostles said to the Lord, "Give us more faith."

"If your faith were as big as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this fig-tree, 'Pull yourself up by the roots and plant yourself in the sea,' and it would do what you said!"

"If any of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep, are you likely to say to him when he comes in from the fields, 'Come straight in and sit down to your meal?' Aren't you more likely to say, 'Get my supper ready: change your coat, and wait until I eat and drink: and then, when I've finished, you can have your meal?' Do you feel particularly grateful to your servant for doing what you tell him? I don't think so. It is the same with yourselves - when you have done everything that you are told to do, you can say, 'We are not much good as servants, for we have only done what we ought to do.'"

As Jesus was approaching a village, ten lepers met him. "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

"Go and show yourselves to the priests."

One of their number saw that he was cured, turned round and fell on his face before Jesus and thanked him. This man was a Samaritan. Jesus remarked:

"Weren't there ten men healed? Where are the other nine? Is nobody going to turn and praise God for what he has done, except this stranger? Stand up now, and go on your way. It is your faith that has made you well."

Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming.

"The kingdom of God never comes by watching for it. Men cannot say, 'Look, here it is,' or 'there it is,' for the kingdom of God is inside you."

Then he said to the disciples,

"The time will come when you will long to see again a single day of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. People will say to you, 'Look, there he is,' or 'Look, here he is.' Stay where you are and don't go off looking for him! For the day of the Son of Man will be like lightning flashing from one end of the sky to the other. But before that happens, he must go through much suffering and be utterly rejected by this generation. In the time of the coming of the Son of Man, life will be as it was in the days of Noah. People ate and drank, married and were given in marriage, right up to the day when Noah entered the ark - and then came the flood and destroyed them all. It will be just the same as it was in the days of Lot. People ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and built, but on the day that Lot left Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. That is how it will be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. When that day comes, the man who is on the roof of his house, with his goods inside it, must not come down to get them. And the man out in the fields must not turn back for anything. Remember what happened to Lot's wife. Whoever tries to preserve his life will lose it, and the man who is prepared to lose his life will preserve it. I tell you, that night there will be two men in one bed, one man will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be turning the grinding-mill together; one will be taken and the other left."

"But where, Lord?" they asked him.

"Wherever there is a dead body, there the vultures will flock,"

Then Jesus said,

"Once upon a time, there was a magistrate in a town who had neither fear of God nor respect for his fellow-men. There was a widow in the town who kept coming to him, saying, 'Please protect me from the man who is trying to ruin me.' And for a long time he refused. But later he said to himself, 'Although I don't fear God and have no respect for men, yet this woman is such a nuisance that I shall give judgment in her favor, or else her continual visits will be the death of me!'"

"Notice how this dishonest magistrate behaved. Do you suppose God, patient as he is, will not see justice done for his chosen, who appeal to him day and night? I assure you he will not delay in seeing justice done. Yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find men on earth who believe in him?"

Jesus told a story:

"Two men went up to the Temple to pray, one was a Pharisee, the other was a tax-collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed like this with himself, 'O God, I do thank you that I am not like the rest of mankind, greedy, dishonest, impure, or even like that tax-collector over there. I fast twice every week; I give away a tenth-part of all my income.'

"But the tax-collector stood in a distant corner, scarcely daring to look up to Heaven, and with a gesture of despair, said, 'God, have mercy on a sinner like me.'

"I assure you that he was the man who went home justified in God's sight, rather than the other one. For everyone who sets himself up as somebody will become a nobody, and the man who makes himself nobody will become somebody."

People began to bring babies to Jesus, but the disciples frowned on them, so Jesus called them to him.

"You must let little children come to me, and you must never prevent their coming. The kingdom of God belongs to little children like these. I tell you, the man who will not accept the kingdom of God like a little child will never get into it at all."

One of the Jewish rulers put this question to him, "Master, I know that you are good; tell me, please, what must I do to be sure of eternal life?"

"I wonder why you call me good? No one is good - only the one God. You know the commandments - 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother'"

"All these I have carefully kept since I was quite young," said the ruler.

"There is still one thing you have missed. Sell everything you possess and give the money away to the poor, and you will have riches in Heaven. Then come and follow me."

The ruler was greatly distressed and his face fell, for he was very rich.

"How difficult it is for those who have great possessions to enter the kingdom of God! A camel could squeeze through the eye of a needle more easily than a rich man could get into the kingdom of God."

"Then who can possibly be saved?" said some of those listening.

"What men find impossible is perfectly possible with God."

"Well we have left all that we ever had and followed you," said Peter.

"Believe me, nobody has left his home, or wife, or brothers, or parents, or children for the sake of the kingdom of God, without receiving very much more in this present life - and eternal life in the world to come."

Jesus took the twelve on one side and spoke to them,

"Listen to me. We are now going up to Jerusalem and everything that has been written by the prophets about the Son of Man will come true. He will be handed over to the heathen, and he is going to be jeered at and insulted and spat upon, and then they will flog and kill him. But he will rise again on the third day."

As the crowd listened attentively it was apparent to Jesus they were expecting the coming kingdom to arrive at any time, so Jesus gave them this parable:

"Once upon a time a man of good family went abroad to accept a kingdom and then return. He summoned ten of his servants and gave them each ten pounds, with the words, 'Use this money to trade with until I come back.' But the citizens detested him and they sent a delegation after him, to say, 'We will not have this man to be our king.' Then later, when he had received his kingdom, he returned and gave orders for the servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him, so that he could find out what profit they had made. The first came into his presence, and said, 'Sire, your ten pounds have made a hundred pounds more.' 'Splendid, my good fellow,' he said, 'since you have proved trustworthy over this small amount, I am going to put you in charge of ten towns.' The second came in and said, 'Sire, your ten pounds have made fifty pounds.' and he said to him, 'Good, you're appointed governor of five towns.' When the last came, he said, 'Sire, here are your ten pounds, which I have been keeping wrapped up in a handkerchief. I have been scared - I know you're a hard man, getting something for nothing and reaping where you never sowed.' To which he replied, 'You scoundrel, your own words condemn you! You knew perfectly well, did you, that I am a hard man who gets something for nothing and reaps where he never sowed? Then why didn't you put my money into the bank, and then when I returned I could have had it back with interest?' Then he said to those who were standing by, 'Take away his ten pounds and give it to the fellow who has a hundred.' 'But, sire, he has a hundred pounds already,' they said to him. 'Yes,' he replied, 'and I tell you that the man who has something will get more given to him. But as for the man who has nothing, even his "nothing" will be taken away. And as for these enemies of mine who objected to my being their king, bring them here and execute them in my presence.'"

As Jesus came still nearer to the Jerusalem, he caught sight of it and wept over it, saying,

"Ah, if you only knew, even at this eleventh hour, on what your peace depends - but you cannot see it. The time is coming when your enemies will encircle you with ramparts, surrounding you and hemming you in on every side. And they will hurl you and all your children to the ground - yes, they will not leave you one stone standing upon another - all because you did not know when God Himself was visiting you!"

Jesus went into the Temple, and proceeded to throw out the traders there.

"It is written: 'My house is a house of prayer,' but you have turned it into a 'den of thieves!'"

One day the chief priests, the scribes and elders asked, "Tell us by whose authority you act as you do - who gave you such authority?"

"I have a question for you, too. John's baptism, now tell me, did it come from Heaven or was it purely human?"

They reasoned, "If we say, 'from Heaven,' he will say to us, 'Then why didn't you believe in him?' but if we say it was purely human, this mob will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." So they replied that they did not know where it came from.

"Then neither will I tell you by what authority I do what I am doing."

Then he turned to the people and told them this parable:

"There was once a man who planted a vineyard, let it be run by farm-workers, and went abroad for some time. Then, when the season arrived, he sent a servant to the farm-workers so that they could give him the proceeds of the vineyard. But the farm-workers beat him up and sent him back empty-handed. So he sent another servant, and they beat him up as well, manhandling him disgracefully, and sent him back empty-handed. Then he sent a third servant, but after wounding him severely they threw him out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do now? I will send them my son who is so dear to me. Perhaps they will respect him.' But when the farm-workers saw him, they talked the matter over with each other and said, 'This man is the heir - come on, let's kill him, and we shall get everything that he would have had!' And they threw him outside the vineyard and killed him. What do you suppose the owner will do to them? He will come and destroy the men who were working his property, and hand it over to others."

The people said, "God forbid!"

"Then what is the meaning of this scripture - 'The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone?' The man who falls on that stone will be broken, and the man on whom it falls will be crushed to powder."

Then they said, "Master, we know that what you say and teach is right. Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

"Show me one of the coins. Whose face is this, and whose name is in the inscription?"

"Caesar's," they said.

"Then give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God."

The Sadducees asked Jesus, "Master, Moses told us in the scripture, 'If a man's brother should die without any children, he should marry the widow and raise up a family for his brother.' What if each of seven brothers should marry her, only to die leaving her no children? Who would she belong to in the resurrection?"

"People in this world marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of reaching that world, which means rising from the dead, neither marry nor are they given in marriage. They cannot die any more but live like the angels; for being children of the resurrection, they are the sons of God. But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed to be true in the story of the bush, when he calls the Lord 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' For God is not God of the dead, but of the living. For all men are alive to him."

Nobody had the courage to ask him any more questions, but Jesus went on to say,

"How can they say that Christ is David's son? For David himself said in the book of psalms - 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.' David is plainly calling him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"

Jesus saw the rich dropping their gifts into the treasury, and he noticed a poor widow drop in two coppers, and he commented:

"I assure you that this poor widow put in more than all of them, for they have all put in what they can easily spare, but she in her poverty has given away her whole living."

Some were talking about the Temple and pointing out the beauty of its lovely stonework and the various ornaments that people had given, when Jesus said,

"Yes, you can gaze on all this today, but the time is coming when not a single stone will be left upon another, without being thrown down."

"Master, when will this happen, and what sign will there be that these things are going to take place?"

"Be careful that you are not deceived. There will be many coming in my name, saying 'I am he' and 'The time is very near now.' Never follow men like that. And when you hear about wars and disturbances, don't be alarmed. These things must indeed happen first, but the end will not come immediately.

"Nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and famines and plagues in this place or that. There will be dreadful sights, and great signs from heaven. But before all this happens, men will arrest you and persecute you, handing you over to synagogue or prison, or bringing you before kings and governors, for my name's sake. This will be your chance to witness for me. So make up your minds not to think out your defense beforehand. I will give you such eloquence and wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict it. But you will be betrayed, even by parents and brothers and kinsfolk and friends. There will be some of you who will be killed and you will be hated everywhere for my name's sake. Yet, not a hair of your head will perish. Hold on, and you will win your souls!

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armed forces, then you will know that the time of her devastation has arrived. Then is the time for those who are in Judea to fly to the hills. And those who are in the city itself must get out of it, and those who are already in the country must not try to get into the city. For these are the days of vengeance, when all that the scriptures have said will come true. Alas for those who are pregnant and those who have tiny babies in those days! For there will be bitter misery in the land and great anger against this people. They will die by the sword. They will be taken off as prisoners into all nations. Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the heathen until the heathen's day is over. There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth there will be dismay among the nations and bewilderment at the roar of the surging sea. Men's courage will fail completely as they realize what is threatening the world, for the very powers of heaven will be shaken. Then men will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and splendor! But when these things begin to happen, look up, hold your heads high, for you will soon be free."

Then he gave them a parable.

"Look at a fig tree, or indeed any tree, when it begins to burst its buds, and you realize without anybody telling you, that summer is nearly here. So, when you see these things happening, you can be equally sure that the kingdom of God has nearly come. Believe me, this generation will not disappear until all this has taken place. Earth and heaven will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

"Be on your guard - see to it that your minds are never clouded by dissipation or drunkenness or the worries of this life, or else that day may catch you like the springing of a trap - for it will come upon every inhabitant of the whole earth.

"You must be vigilant at all times, praying that you may be strong enough to come safely through all that is going to happen, and stand in the presence of the Son of Man."

22:7-8 - Then the day of sacrificing the Passover lamb arrived, and Jesus told Peter and John:

"Go and make all the preparations for us to eat the Passover."

"Where would you like us to do this?"

"Listen, just as you're going into the city a man carrying a jug of water will meet you. Follow him to the house he is making for. Then say to the owner of the house, 'The Master has this message for you - which is the room where my disciples and I may eat the Passover?' And he will take you upstairs and show you a large room furnished for our needs. Make all the preparations there."

So they went off and made the Passover preparations, and when the time came, he took his seat at table with the apostles, and spoke to them,

"With all my heart I have longed to eat this Passover with you before the time comes for me to suffer. Believe me, I shall not eat the Passover again until all that it means is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Taking a cup from them he thanked God, and said,

"Take this and share it amongst yourselves, for I tell you I shall drink no more wine until the kingdom of God comes."

Then he took a loaf and after thanking God he broke it and gave it to them,

"This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper he again gave them a cup with the words,

"This cup is the new agreement made in my own blood which is shed for you. Yet the hand of the man who is betraying me lies with mine at this moment on the table. The Son of Man goes on his appointed way, yet alas for the man by whom he is betrayed!"

They began to debate who among them could do this thing and then resorted into who should be considered the most important, but Jesus said:

"Among the heathen it is their kings who lord it over them, and their rulers are given the title of 'benefactors.' But it must not be so with you! Your greatest man must become like a junior and your leader must be a servant. Who is the greater -- the man who sits down to dinner or the man who serves him? Obviously, the man who sits down to dinner, yet I am the one who is the servant among you. But you are the men who have stood by me in all that I have gone through, and as surely as my Father has given me my kingdom, so I give you the right to eat and drink at my table in that kingdom. Yes, you will sit on thrones and rule the twelve tribes of Israel!"

"Oh Simon, Simon, do you know that Satan has asked to have you all to sift like wheat? But I have prayed for you that you may not lose your faith. Yes, when you have turned back to me, you must strengthen these brothers of yours."

Peter said, "Lord, I am ready to go to prison or even to die with you!"

"I tell you, Peter, before the cock crows today you will deny three times that you know me!"

Then he told all,

"That time when I sent you out without any purse or wallet or shoes - did you find you needed anything?"

"No, not a thing," they replied.

"But now, if you have a purse or wallet, take it with you, and if you have no sword, sell your coat and buy one! For I tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me - 'And he was numbered with the transgressors.' So comes the end of what they wrote about me."

Jesus went up on to the Mount of Olives, with the disciples following him. When they arrived, he said to them,

"Pray that you may not have to face temptation!"

Then off by himself, he fell on his knees.

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me - but it is not my will, but yours, that must be done."

An angel from Heaven appeared, strengthening him, as he prayed intensely. Then he got to his feet, finding the disciples sleeping.

"Why are you sleeping? You must get up and go on praying that you may not have to face temptation."

A crowd of people arrived, led by Judas, who stepped up to Jesus to kiss him.

"Judas, would you betray the son of Man with a kiss?"

The disciples, seeing what was going to happen, cried, "Lord, shall we use our swords?" One of them did slash at the High Priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus retorted,

"That will do!"

And he touched his ear and healed him. Then he spoke to those there to arrest him,

"So you have come out with your swords and staves as if I were a bandit. Day after day I was with you in the Temple and you never laid a finger on me - but this is your hour and the power of darkness is yours!"

After marching Jesus off to council, they asked him, "If you really are Christ, tell us!"

"If I tell you, you will never believe me, and if I ask you a question, you will not answer me. But from now on the Son of Man will take his seat at the right hand of almighty God."

Then they all said, "So you are the Son of God then?"

"You are right; I am,"

Taking Jesus to Pilate, he asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Yes, I am,"

As Jesus was led to the site of the crucifixion, a huge crowd of people followed him, including women who wrung their hands and wept for him.

"Women of Jerusalem, do not shed your tears for me, but for yourselves and for your children! For the days are coming when men will say, 'Lucky are the women who are childless - the bodies which have never born, and the breasts which have never given nourishment.' Then men will begin 'to say to the mountains, Fall on us! and to the hills, Cover us!' For if this is what men do when the wood is green, what will they do when it is seasoned?"

Two criminals were crucified along with Jesus, who said,

"Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing."

One of the criminals covered him with abuse, and said, "Aren't you Christ? Why don't you save yourself - and us?" But the other one checked him with the words, "Aren't you afraid of God even when you're getting the same punishment as he is? And it's fair enough for us, for we've only got what we deserve, but this man never did anything wrong in his life." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And Jesus answered,

"I tell you truly, this day you will be with me in paradise."

At about midday, Jesus gave a great cry and said,

"Father, 'into your hands I commend my spirit.'"

And with these words, he died.

As two men walked along, Jesus followed with them as they recounted events of recent days and the fact that women had experienced him at the temple, but no signs had been seen by those who went to check it out. Then he spoke to them,

"Aren't you failing to understand, and slow to believe in all that the prophets have said? Was it not inevitable that Christ should suffer like that and so find his glory?"

Then, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them everything in the scriptures that referred to himself. And while they were still talking about these things, Jesus stood among them and said,

"Peace be to you all!"

They thought they were seeing a ghost and were afraid.

"Why are you so worried, and why do doubts arise in your minds? Look at my hands and feet - it is really I myself! Feel me and see; ghosts have no flesh or bones as you can see that I have."

They still could not believe it through sheer joy and were quite bewildered, and Jesus said to them,

"Have you anything here to eat?"

They gave him a piece of broiled fish and part of a honeycomb. Then he said,

"Here and now are fulfilled the words that I told you when I was with you: that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must come true. That is how it was written, and that is why it was inevitable that Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead on the third day. So must the change of heart which leads to the forgiveness of sins be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

"You are eyewitnesses of these things. Now I hand over to you the command of my Father. Stay in the city, then, until you are clothed with power from on high."

IV
From the Gospel According to John

Jesus saw Nathaniel coming towards him and remarked,

"Now here is a true man of Israel. There is no deceit in him!"

"How can you know me?" returned Nathaniel.

"When you were underneath that fig-tree, before Philip called you, I saw you."

Nathaniel exclaimed, "Master, you are the Son of God, you are the king of Israel!"

"Do you believe in me, because I said I had seen you underneath that fig-tree? You are going to see something greater than that! Believe me, I tell you all that you will see Heaven wide open and God's angels ascending and descending around the Son of Man!"

In the Temple Jesus discovered the exploitation of dealers and money-changers.

"Take those things out of here. Don't you dare turn my Father's house into a market!"

Nicodemus, a leading Jew, came to see Jesus. "Master, we realize that you are a teacher who has come from God. Obviously no one could show the signs that you show unless God were with him."

"Believe me, a man cannot even see the kingdom of God without being born again."

"How can a man go back into his mother's womb and be born a second time?"

"I assure you that unless a man is born from water and from spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh and spirit gives birth to spirit. You must not be surprised that I told you that all of you must be born again. The wind blows where it likes, you can hear the sound of it but you have no idea where it comes from and where it goes. Nor can you tell how a man is born by the wind of the Spirit."

"How on earth can things like this happen?"

"So you are a teacher of Israel and you do not recognize such things? I assure you that we are talking about something we really know and we are witnessing to something we have actually observed, yet men like you will not accept our evidence. Yet if I have spoken to you about things which happen on this earth and you will not believe me, what chance is there that you will believe me if I tell you about what happens in Heaven? No one has ever been up to Heaven except the Son of Man who came down from Heaven. The Son of Man must be lifted above the heads of men - as Moses lifted up that serpent in the desert - so that any man who believes in him may have eternal life. For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that every one who believes in him shall not be lost, but should have eternal life.

"You must understand that God has not sent his Son into the world to pass sentence upon it, but to save it - through him. Any man who believes in him is not judged at all. It is the one who will not believe who stands already condemned, because he will not believe in the character of God's

only Son. This is the judgment - that light has entered the world and men have preferred darkness to light because their deeds are evil. Anybody who does wrong hates the light and keeps away from it for fear that his deeds may be exposed. But anybody who is living by the truth will come to the light to make it plain that all he has done has been done through God."

At "Jacob's Spring" a Samaritan woman arrived to draw some water. Jesus said to her,

"Please give me a drink."

"How can you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?"

"If you knew what God can give, and if you knew who it is that said to you, 'Give me a drink,' I think you would have asked him for one, and he would have given you living water!"

"Sir, you have nothing to draw water with and this well is deep - where can you get your living water? Are you a greater man than our ancestor, Jacob, who gave us this well, and drank here himself with his family, and his cattle?"

"Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I will give him will never be thirsty again. For my gift will become a spring in the man himself, welling up into eternal life."

"Sir, give me this water, so that I may stop being thirsty and not have to come here to draw water any more!"

"Go and call your husband and then come back here."

"I haven't got a husband!" the woman answered.

"You are quite right in saying, 'I haven't got a husband,' for you have had five husbands and the man you have now is not your husband at all. Yes, you spoke the simple truth when you said that."

"Sir, I can see that you are a prophet! Our ancestors worshipped on this hillside, but you Jews say that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

"Believe me, the time is coming when worshipping the Father will not be a matter of 'on this hillside' or 'in Jerusalem.' Nowadays you are worshipping with your eyes shut. We Jews are worshipping with our eyes open, for the salvation of mankind is to come from our race. Yet the time is coming, yes, and has already come, when true worshippers will worship in spirit and in reality. Indeed, the Father looks for men who will worship him like that. God is spirit, and those who worship him can only worship in spirit and in reality."

"Of course I know that Messiah is coming. The one who is called Christ, when he comes he will make everything plain to us."

"I am Christ speaking to you now."

At this point his disciples arrived, and begged Jesus, "Master, do eat something." Jesus replied,

"I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

The disciples asked each other, "Do you think anyone has brought him any food?"

"My food is doing the will of Him who sent me and finishing the work He has given me. Don't you say, 'Four months more and then comes the harvest?' But I tell you to open your eyes and look to the field - they are gleaming white, all ready for the harvest! The reaper is already being rewarded and getting in a harvest for eternal life, so that both sower and reaper may be glad together. For in this harvest the old saying comes true -- 'One man sows and another reaps.' I have sent you to reap a harvest for which you never labored. Other men have worked hard and you have reaped the results of their labors."

At Capernaum, an official's son was very ill. He went off to see Jesus and begged him to come down and heal his son. Jesus said,

"I suppose you will never believe unless you see signs and wonders!"

"Sir, please come down before my boy dies!"

"You can go home. Your son is alive and well."

At the Pool of Bethesda, under the arches, Jesus saw a man with a long time illness lying there on his back, and asked,

"Do you want to get well again?"

"Sir, I just haven't got anybody to put me into the pool when the water is all stirred up. While I'm trying to get there somebody else gets down into it first."

"Get up, pick up your bed, and walk!"

At once the man recovered, picked up his bed and walked. This was the Sabbath, and it was because Jesus did such things on the Sabbath day that the Jews persecuted him. But Jesus' answer to them was this:

"My Father is still at work and therefore I work as well."

The Jewish leaders were determined to kill Jesus, because not only did he break the Sabbath but he referred to God as his own Father, so putting himself on equal terms with God. Jesus said to them,

"I assure you that the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. What the Son does is always modeled on what the Father does, for the Father loves the Son and shows him everything that he does himself, Yes, and he will show him even greater things than these to fill you with wonder. For just as the Father raises the dead and makes them live, so does the Son give life to any man he chooses. The Father is no man's judge: he has put judgment entirely into the Son's hands, so that all men may honor the Son equally with the Father. The man who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.

"I solemnly assure you that the man who hears what I have to say and believes in the one who has sent me has eternal life. He does not have to face judgment; he has already passed from death into life. Yes, I assure you that a time is coming, in fact has already come, when the dead will

hear the voice of the Son of God and when they have heard it they will live! For just as the Father has life in himself, so by the Father's gift, the Son also has life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is Son of Man. No, do not be surprised - the time is coming when all those who are dead and buried will hear his voice and out they will come - those who have done right will rise again to life, but those who have done wrong will rise to face judgment!

"By myself I can do nothing. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is true because I do not live to please myself but to do the will of the Father who sent me. You may say that I am bearing witness about myself, that therefore what I say about myself has no value, but I would remind you that there is one who witnesses about me and I know that his witness about me is absolutely true. You sent to John, and he testified to the truth. Not that it is man's testimony that I accept - I only tell you this to help you to be saved. John certainly was a lamp that burned and shone, and for a time you were willing to enjoy the light that he gave. But I have a higher testimony than John's. The work that the Father gave me to complete, yes, these very actions which I do, are my witness that the Father has sent me. This is how the Father who has sent me has given his own personal testimony to me.

"Now you have never at any time heard what he says or seen what he is like. Nor do you really believe his word in your hearts, for you refuse to believe the man who he has sent. You pore over the scriptures for you imagine that you will find eternal life in them. And all the time they give their testimony to me! But you are not willing to come to me to have real life! Men's approval or disapproval means nothing to me, but I can tell that you have none of the love of God in your hearts. I have come in the name of my Father and you will not accept me. Yet if another man comes simply in his own name, you will accept him. How on earth can you believe while you are for ever looking for each other's approval and not for the glory that comes from the one God? There is no need for you to think that I have come to accuse you before the Father. You already have an accuser - Moses, in whom you put all your confidence! For if you really believed Moses, you would be bound to believe me; for it was about me that he wrote. But if you do not believe what he wrote, how can you believe what I say?"

The following day, when the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor the disciples were there any longer, they themselves got into the boats and went off to Capernaum to look for Jesus. When they had found him on the other side of the lake, they said to him, "Master, when did you come here?"

"Believe me, you are looking for me now not because you saw my signs but because you ate that food and had all you wanted. You should not work for the food which does not last but for the food which lasts on into eternal life. This is the food the Son of Man will give you, and he is the one who bears the stamp of God the Father."

This made them ask him, "What must we do to carry out the work of God?"

"The work of God for you is to believe in the one whom he has sent to you."

"Then what sign can you give us that will make us believe in you? What work are you doing? Our forefathers ate manna in the desert just as the scripture says."

"Yes, but what matters is not that Moses gave you bread from Heaven, but that my Father is giving you the true bread from Heaven. For the bread of God which comes down from Heaven gives life to the world."

They said, "Lord, please give us this bread, always!"

"I myself am the bread of life. The man who comes to me will never be hungry and the man who believes in me will never again be thirsty. Yet I have told you that you have seen me and do not believe. Everything that my Father gives me will come to me and I will never refuse anyone who comes to me. For I have come down from Heaven, not to do what I want, but to do the will of him who sent me. The will of him who sent me is that I should not lose anything of what he has given me, but should raise it up when the last day comes. And this is the will of the one who sent me, that everyone who sees the Son and trusts in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up when the last day comes."

The Jews began grumbling at this. "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose parents we know? How can he say that 'I have come down from Heaven?'" Jesus answered,

"Do not grumble among yourselves. Nobody comes to me unless he is drawn to me by the Father who sent me, and I will raise him up when the last day comes. In the prophets it is written -'And they shall all be taught by God,' and this means that everybody who has heard the Father's voice and learned from him will come to me. Not that anyone has ever seen the Father except the one who comes from God - he has seen the Father. I assure you that the man who trusts in him has eternal life already. I myself am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate manna in the desert, and they died. This is bread that comes down from Heaven, so that a man may eat it and not die. I myself am the living bread which came down from Heaven, and if anyone eats this bread he will live for ever. The bread which I will give is my body and I shall give it for the life of the world."

The Jews argued, "How can this man give us his body to eat?"

"Unless you do eat the body of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you are not really living at all. The man who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up when the last day comes. For my body is real food and my blood is real drink. The man who eats my body and drinks my blood shares my life and I share his. Just as the living Father sent me and I am alive because of the Father, so the man who lives on me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from Heaven! It is not like the manna which your forefathers used to eat, and died. The man who eats this bread will live for ever."

Many of his disciples heard him say these things, and commented, "This is hard teaching indeed; who could accept that?"

"Is this too much for you? Then what would happen if you were to see the Son of Man going up to the place where he was before? It is the Spirit which gives life. The flesh will not help you. The things which I have told you are spiritual and are life. But some of you will not believe me. This is why I said to you, 'No one can come to me unless my Father puts it into his heart to come.'"

A Jewish festival was approaching and his brothers said to him, "You ought to leave here and go to Judea so that your disciples can see what you are doing, for nobody works in secret if he wants to be known publicly. If you are going to do things like this, let the world see what you are doing." Jesus replied by saying,

"It is not yet the right time for me, but any time is right for you. You see, it is impossible for you to arouse the world's hatred, but I provoke hatred because I show the world how evil its deeds really are. No, you go up to the festival; I shall not go up now, for it is not yet time for me to go."

But at the very height of the festival, Jesus went up to the Temple and began teaching. The Jews were amazed. "How does this man know all this - he has never been taught?"

"My teaching is not really mine but comes from the one who sent me. If anyone wants to do God's will, he will know whether my teaching is from God or whether I merely speak on my own authority. A man who speaks on his own authority has an eye for his own reputation. But the man who is considering the glory of God who sent him is a true man. There can be no dishonesty about him.

"Did not Moses give you the Law? Yet not a single one of you obeys the Law. Why are you trying to kill me?"

The crowd answered, "You must be mad! Who is trying to kill you?"

"I have done one thing and you are all amazed at it. Moses gave you circumcision, and you will circumcise a man even on the Sabbath. If a man receives the cutting of circumcision on the Sabbath to avoid breaking the Law of Moses, why should you be angry with me because I have made a man's body perfectly whole on the Sabbath? You must not judge by the appearance of things but by the reality!"

Some of the people were saying, "Isn't this the man whom they are trying to kill? It's amazing - he talks quite openly and they haven't a word to say to him. Surely our rulers haven't decided that this really is Christ! But then, we know this man and where he comes from - when Christ comes, no one will know where he comes from."

"So you know me and know where I have come from? But I have not come of my own accord; I am sent by one who is true and you do not know him! I do know him, because I come from him and he has sent me here."

Then, on the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood up and cried out,

"If any man is thirsty, he can come to me and drink! The man who believes in me, as the scripture says, will have rivers of living water flowing from his inmost heart."

A woman was caught in adultery, and brought to Jesus to test him. "According to the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women to death. Now, what do you say about her?" Jesus simply stooped down and began to write with his finger in the dust on the ground. But as they persisted in their questioning, he straightened himself up and said to them,

"Let the one among you who has never sinned throw the first stone at her."

Then he stooped down again and continued writing with his finger on the ground. And when they heard what he said, they all left one by one. So Jesus stood up and said to the woman,

"Where are they all - did no one condemn you?"

And she said, "No one, sir."

"Neither do I condemn you. Go home and do not sin again."

Later, Jesus spoke to the people again and said,

"I am the light of the world. The man who follows me will never walk in the dark but will live his life in the light."

Pharisees said, "You are testifying to yourself - your evidence is not valid."

"Even if I am testifying to myself, my evidence is valid, for I know where I have come from and I know where I am going. But as for you, you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. You are judging by human standards, but I am not judging anyone. Yet if I should judge, my decision would be just, for I am not alone - the Father who sent me is with me. In your Law, it is stated that the witness of two persons is valid. I am one testifying to myself and the second witness to me is the Father who sent me."

"And where is this father of yours?" they replied.

"You do not know my Father any more than you know me. If you had known me, you would have known him."

Later, Jesus spoke to them again and said,

"I am going away and you will try to find me, but you will die in your sins. You cannot come where I am going."

This made the Jews say, "Is he going to kill himself, then? Is that why he says, 'You cannot come where I am going?'"

"The difference between us is that you come from below and I am from above. You belong to this world but I do not. That is why I told you will die in your sins. For unless you believe that I am who I am, you will die in your sins."

Then they said, "Who are you?"

"I am what I have told you I was from the beginning. There is much in you that I could speak about and condemn. But he who sent me is true and I am only speaking to this world what I myself have heard from him.

"When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am who I say I am, and that I do nothing on my own authority but speak simply as my Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me now: the Father has never left me alone for I always do what pleases him."

"If you are faithful to what I have said, you are truly my disciples. And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free!"

"But we are descendants of Abraham, and we have never in our lives been any man's slaves.

"Believe me when I tell you that every man who commits sin is a slave. For a slave is no permanent part of a household, but a son is. If the Son, then, sets you free, you are really free! I know that you are descended from Abraham, but some of you are looking for a way to kill me because you can't bear my words. I am telling you what I have seen in the presence of my Father, and you are doing what you have seen in the presence of your father."

"Our father is Abraham!" they retorted.

"If you were the children of Abraham, you would do the sort of things Abraham did. But in fact, at this moment, you are looking for a way to kill me, simply because I am a man who has told you the truth that I have heard from God. Abraham would never have done that. No, you are doing your father's work."

"We are not illegitimate! We have one Father - God."

"If God were really your Father, you would have loved me. For I came from God and I am here. I did not come of my own accord; he sent me, and I am here. Why do you not understand my words? It is because you cannot hear what I am really saying. Your father is the devil, and what you are wanting to do is what your father longs to do. He always was a murderer, and has never dealt with the truth, since the truth will have nothing to do with him. Whenever he tells a lie, he speaks in character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. And it is because I speak the truth that you will not believe me. Which of you can prove me guilty of sin? If I am speaking the truth, why is it that you do not believe me? The man who is born of God can hear these words of God and the reason why you cannot hear the words of God is simply this, that you are not the sons of God."

Some said, "How right we are in calling you a Samaritan, and mad at that!"

"No, I am not mad. I am honoring my Father and you are trying to dishonor me. But I am not concerned with my own glory: there is one whose concern it is, and he is the true judge. Believe me when I tell you that if anybody accepts my words, he will never see death at all."

"Now we know that you're mad. Abraham died and the prophets, too, and yet you say, 'If a man accepts my words, he will never experience death!' Are you greater than our father, Abraham?"

"If I were trying to glorify myself, such glory would be worthless. But it is my Father who glorifies me, the very one whom you say is your God - though you have never known him. But I know him, and if I said I did not know him, I should be as much a liar as you are! But I do know him and I am faithful to what he says. As for your father, Abraham, his great joy was that he would see my coming. Now he has seen it and he is overjoyed."

And they said, "Look, you are not fifty yet, and has Abraham seen you?"

"I tell you in solemn truth, before there was an Abraham, I AM!"

The disciples asked, "Master, whose sin caused this man's blindness, his own or his parents?"

"He was not born blind because of his own sin or that of his parents, but to show the power of God at work in him. We must carry on the work of Him who sent me while the daylight lasts. Night is coming, when no one can work. I am the world's light as long as I am in it."

Having said this, he spat on the ground, made a sort of clay with the saliva and then applied it to the man's eyes.

"Go and wash in the pool of Siloam."

The man went off and washed and came home with his sight restored. Later, Jesus heard that they had expelled the blind man who had found his sight, so Jesus went to him.

"Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

"And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I can believe in him."

"You have seen him. It is the one who is talking to you now."

"Lord, I do believe."

"My coming into this world is itself a judgment. Those who cannot see have their eyes opened and those who think they can see become blind."

Some of the Pharisees overheard this and said, "So we're blind, too, are we?"

"If you were blind, nobody could blame you, but as you insist, 'We can see,' your guilt remains. Believe me when I tell you that anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the door, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a rogue. It is the shepherd of the flock who goes in by the door. It is to him the doorkeeper opens the door and it is his voice that the sheep recognize. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out of the fold, and when he has driven all his own flock outside, he goes in front of them himself, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will never follow a stranger. Indeed, they will run away from him, for they do not recognize strange voices.

"I do assure you that I myself am the door for the sheep. All who have gone before me are like thieves and rogues, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door. If a man goes in through me, he will be safe and sound; he can come in and out and find his food. The thief comes with the sole intention of stealing and killing and destroying, but I came to bring them life, and far more life than before. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd will give his life for the sake of his sheep. But the hired man, who is not the shepherd, and does not own the sheep, will see the wolf coming, desert the sheep and run away. And the wolf will attack the flock and send them flying. The hired man runs away because he is only a hired man and has no interest in the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know those that are mine, and my sheep know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I am giving my life for the sake of the sheep.

"And I have other sheep who do not belong to this fold. I must lead these also, and they will hear my voice. So there will be one flock and one shepherd. This is the reason why the Father loves me, for I lay down my life, and I lay it down to take it up again! No one is taking it from me, but I lay it down of my own free will. I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it up again. This is an order that I have received from my Father."

At the dedication festival in Jerusalem the Jews closed in on him and said, "If you really are Christ, tell us so straight out!"

"I have told you and you do not believe it. What I have done in my Father's name is sufficient to prove my claim, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep recognize my

voice and I know who they are. They follow me and I give them eternal life. They will never die and no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. And no one can tear anything out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are One."

The Jews reached for stones to stone him to death.

"I have shown you many good things from the Father. For which of these do you intend to stone me?"

"We're not going to stone you for any good things, but for blasphemy, because you, who are only a man, are making yourself out to be God."

"Is it not written in your own Law, 'I have said you are gods?' And if he called these men 'gods' to whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), can you say to the one whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming' because I said, 'I am the Son of God?' If I fail to do what my Father does, then do not believe me. But if I do, even though you have no faith in me personally, then believe in the things that I do. Then you may come to know and realize that the Father is in me and I am in the Father."

A friend of Jesus named Lazarus took ill and so his sisters sent for Jesus. When Jesus received the message, he said,

"This illness is not meant to end in death. It is going to bring glory to God, for it will show the glory of the Son of God."

After two more days of ministering, he said:

"Let us go back into Judea."

Fearing for Jesus' safety after the near stoning incident, the disciples balked, to which Jesus responded:

"There are twelve hours of daylight every day, are there not? If a man walks in the daytime, he does not stumble, for he has the daylight to see by. But if he walks at night he stumbles, because he cannot see where he is going. Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him up."

When Jesus arrived, Martha, a sister of Lazarus, came to Jesus, asking for his help, for Lazarus had died days earlier.

"Your brother will rise again."

"I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day," said Martha.

"I myself am the resurrection and the life. The man who believes in me will live even though he dies, and anyone who is alive and believes in me will never die at all. Can you believe that?"

"Yes, Lord," replied Martha. When Martha's sister Mary met Jesus, she looked at him, and then fell down at his feet. When Jesus saw Mary weep and noticed the tears of the Jews who came with her, he was deeply moved.

"Where have you put him?"

They took him to the tomb where Lazarus lay.

"Take away the stone."

"But Lord," said Martha, "he has been dead four days. He will be decaying"

"Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the wonder of what God can do?"

Then they took the stone away.

"Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of these people standing here so that they may believe that you have sent me. Lazarus, come forth!"

And the dead man came out.

"Now unbind him, and let him go home."

There was a gathering in Bethany, where a supper was given by Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. At one point, Mary took a whole pound of very expensive perfume and anointed Jesus' feet and then wiped them with her hair. Judas Iscariot burst out, "Why on earth wasn't this perfume sold? The money could have been given to the poor!"

"Let her alone. Let her keep this for the day of my burial. You have the poor with you always. You will not always have me!"

"Every man who believes in me is believing in the one who sent me, and every man who sees me is seeing the one who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that no one who believes in me need remain in the dark. Yet, if anyone hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him, for I did not come to judge the world but to save it. Every man who rejects me and will not accept my sayings has a judge. At the last day, the very words that I have spoken will be his judge. For I have not spoken on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and what to speak. And I know that what he commands means eternal life. All that I say I speak only in accordance with what the Father has told me."

Jesus began the process of washing the feet of his disciples, and Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, You must never wash my feet!"

"Unless you let me wash you Peter, you cannot share my lot."

"Then please, not just my feet but my hands and my face as well!" said Peter.

"The man who has bathed only needs to wash his feet to be clean all over. And you are clean, though not all of you."

Jesus made reference to the betrayal soon to come. When Jesus had washed their feet, he sat down and spoke to them,

"Do you realize what I have just done to you? You call me 'teacher' and 'Lord' and you are quite right, for I am your teacher and your Lord. But if I, your teacher and Lord, have washed your feet, you must be ready to wash one another's feet. I have given you this as an example so that you may do as I have done. Believe me, the servant is not greater than his master and the messenger is not greater than the man who sent him. Once you have realized these things, you will find your happiness in doing them.

"I am not speaking about all of you - I know the men I have chosen - but let this scripture be fulfilled: 'He who eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.' I tell you truly that anyone who accepts my messenger will be accepting me, and anyone who accepts me will be accepting the one who sent me. I tell you plainly, one of you is going to betray me."

The disciples stared at each other, mystified.

"It is the one I am going to give this piece of bread to, after I have dipped it in the dish."

Then he took a piece of bread, dipped it in the dish and gave it to Judas Iscariot. After which, Jesus said to him,

"Be quick about your business!"

Judas took the piece of bread and went out quickly into the night. Jesus continued.

"Now comes the glory of the Son of Man, and the glory of God in him! If God is glorified through him then God will glorify the Son of Man - and that without delay. Oh, my children, I am with you such a short time! You will look for me and I have to tell you as I told the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot follow.'

"Now I am giving you a new command - love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you must love one another. This is how all men will know that you are my disciples, because you have such love for one another."

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?"

"I am going where you cannot follow now, though you will follow me later."

"Lord, why can't I follow you now?" said Peter. "I would lay down my life for you!"

"Would you lay down your life for me? Believe me, you will disown me three times before the cock crows!"

Continuing on, Jesus said:

"You must not let yourselves be distressed. You must hold on to your faith in God and to your faith in me. There are many rooms in my Father's House. If there were not, should I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? It is true that I am going away to prepare a place for you, but it is just as true that I am coming again to welcome you into my own home, so that you may be where I am. You know where I am going and you know the road I am going to take."

Thomas said, "Lord, we do not know where you're going, so how can we know what way you're going to take?"

"I myself am the way and the truth and the life. No one approaches the Father except through me. If you had known who I am, you would have known my Father. From now on, you do know him and you have seen him."

Then Philip said, "Show us the Father, Lord, and we shall be satisfied."

"Have I been such a long time with you without your really knowing me, Philip? The man who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The very words I say to you are not my own. It is the Father who lives in me who carries out his work through me. Do you believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? But if you cannot, then believe me because of what you see me do. I assure you that the man who believes in me will do the same things that I have done. Yes, and he will do even greater things than these, for I am going away to the Father. Whatever you ask the Father in my name, I will do, that the Son may bring glory to the Father. And if you ask me anything in my name, I will grant it.

"If you really love me, you will keep the commandments I have given you and I shall ask the Father to give you someone else to stand by you, to be with you always. I mean the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot accept, for it can neither see nor recognize that Spirit. But you recognize him, for he is with you now and will be in your hearts. I am not going to leave you alone in the world. I am coming to you. In a very little while, the world will see me no more but you will see me, because I am really alive and you will be alive too. When that day comes, you will realize that I am in my Father, that you are in me, and I am in you.

"Every man who knows my commandments and obeys them is the man who really loves me, and every man who really loves me will himself be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and make myself known to him."

Then Judas Alpheus said, "Lord, how is it that you are going to make yourself known to us but not to the world?"

"When a man loves me, he follows my teaching. Then my Father will love him, and we will come to that man and make our home within him. The man who does not really love me will not follow my teaching. Indeed, what you are hearing from me now is not really my saying, but comes from the Father who sent me.

"I have said all this while I am still with you. But the one who is coming to stand by you, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will be your teacher and will bring to your minds all that I have said to you.

"I leave behind with you, my peace. I give you my own peace and my gift is nothing like the peace of this world. You must not be distressed and you must not be daunted. You have heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you really loved me, you would be glad because I am going to my Father, for my Father is greater than I. And I have told you of it now, before it happens, so that when it does happen, your faith in me will not be shaken. I shall not be able to talk much longer to you for the spirit that rules this world is coming very close. He has no hold over me, but I go on my way to show the world that I love the Father and do what he sent me to do.

"Get up now! Let us leave this place."

Jesus taught the disciples further.

"I am the true vine. My Father is the vine dresser. He removes any of my branches which are not bearing fruit and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit to increase its yield. Now, you have already been pruned by my words. You must go on growing in me and I will grow in you. For just as the branch cannot bear any fruit unless it shares the life of the vine, so you can produce nothing unless you go on growing in me. I am the vine itself; you are the branches. It is the man who shares my life and whose life I share who proves fruitful. For the plain fact is that apart from me you can do nothing at all. The man who does not share my life is like a branch that is broken off and withers away. He becomes just like the dry sticks that men pick up and use for the firewood. But if you live your life in me, and my words live in your hearts, you can ask for whatever you like and it will come true for you. This is how my Father will be glorified - in your becoming fruitful and being my disciples.

"I have loved you just as the Father has loved me. You must go on living in my love. If you keep my commandments you will live in my love just as I have kept my Father's commandments and live in his love. I have told you this so that you can share my joy, and that your happiness may be complete. This is my commandment: that you love each other as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: that a man should lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I tell you to do. I shall not call you servants any longer, for a servant does not share his master's confidence. No, I call you friends, now, because I have told you everything that I have heard from the Father.

"It is not that you have chosen me, but it is I who has chosen you. I have appointed you to go and bear fruit that will be lasting; so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you.

"This I command you - love one another! If the world hates you, know that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, the world would love its own. But because you do not belong to the world and I have chosen you out of it, the world will hate you. Do you remember what I said to you? 'The servant is not greater than his master.' If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you as well, but if they have followed my teaching, they will also follow yours. They will do all these things to you as my disciples because they do not know the one who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have been guilty of sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. The one who hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them things that no other man has ever done, they would not have been guilty of sin, but as it is they have seen and they have hated both me and my Father. Yet this only fulfills what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without a cause.'

"But when the helper comes, the Spirit of Truth who comes from the Father and whom I myself will send to you from the Father, he will speak plainly about me. And you yourselves will also speak plainly about me for you have been with me from the first.

"I am telling you this now so that your faith in me may not be shaken. They will excommunicate you from their synagogues. Yes, the time is coming when a man who kills you will think he is thereby serving God! They will act like this because they have never had any true knowledge of the Father or of me, but I have told you all this so that when the time comes for it to happen, you may remember that I told you about it.

"I have not spoken like this to you before, because I have been with you, but now the time has come for me to go away to the one who sent me. None of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' That is because you are so distressed at what I have told you. Yet I am telling you the simple truth when I assure you that it is a good thing for you that I should go away. For if I did not go away, the divine helper would not come to you. But if I go, then I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convince the world of the meaning of sin, of true goodness and of judgment. He

will expose their sin because they do not believe in me; he will reveal true goodness for I am going away to the Father and you will see me no longer; and he will show them the meaning of judgment, for the spirit which rules this world will have been judged.

"I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. Yet when that one comes that I have spoken to you about - the Spirit of Truth - he will guide you into everything that is true. For he will not be speaking of his own accord, but exactly as he hears, and he will inform you about what is to come. He will bring glory to me, for he will draw on my truth and reveal it to you. Whatever the Father possesses is also mine. That is why I tell you that he will draw on my truth and will show it to you.

"In a little while you will not see me any longer, and again, in a little while you will see me."

The disciples talked amongst each other trying to figure out what Jesus was saying, but they were perplexed.

"Are you trying to find out from each other what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will not see me, and again, in a little while you will see me?' I tell you truly that you are going to be both sad and sorry while the world is glad. Yes, you will be deeply distressed, but your pain will turn into joy. When a woman gives birth to a child, she certainly knows pain when her time comes. Yet as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers her agony for joy that a child has been born into the world. Now you are going through pain, but I shall see you again and your hearts will thrill with joy - the joy that no one can take away from you - and on that day you will not ask me any questions.

"I assure you that whatever you ask the Father he will give you in my name. Up to now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask now and you will receive, that your joy may be overflowing.

"I have been speaking to you in parables - but the time is coming to give up parables and tell you plainly about the Father. When that time comes, you will make your requests to him in my own name, for I need make no promise to plead to the Father for you, for the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. Yes, I did come from the Father and I came into the world. Now I leave the world behind and return to the Father."

"Now you are speaking plainly. Now we know that everything is known to you. No more questions are needed. This makes us sure that you did come from God," said the disciples.

"So you believe in me now? The time is coming - indeed, it has already come - when you will be scattered, every one of you going home and leaving me alone. Yet I am not really alone, for the Father is with me. I have told you all this so that you may find your peace in me. You will find trouble in the world, but never lose heart. I have conquered the world!"

Jesus raised his eyes to Heaven.

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son now so that he may bring glory to you, for you have given him authority over all men to give eternal life for all that you have given to him. And this is eternal life, to know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent - Jesus Christ.

"I have brought you honor upon earth. I have completed the task which you gave me to do. Now Father, honor me in your own presence with the glory that I knew with you before the world was made. I have shown your self to the men whom you gave me from the world. They were your

men and you gave them to me, and they have accepted your word. Now they realize that all that you have given me comes from you, and that every message you gave me, I have given them. They have accepted it all and have come to know in their hearts that I did come from you. They are convinced that you sent me.

"I am praying for you for them. I am not praying for the world but for the men whom you gave me, for they are yours. Everything that is mine is yours and yours mine, and they have done me honor. Now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world and I am returning to you. Holy Father, keep the men you gave me by your power that they may be one as we are one. As long as I was with them I kept them by the power that you gave me. I guarded them, and not one of them was destroyed, except the son of destruction - that the scripture might come true.

"And now I come to you and I say these things in the world that these men may find my joy completed in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, for they are no more sons of the world than I am. I am not praying that you will take them out of the world but that you will keep them from the evil one. They are no more the sons of the world than I am. Make them holy by the truth, for your word is the truth. I have sent them to the world just as you sent me to the world and I consecrate myself for their sakes that they may be made holy by the truth.

"I am not praying only for these men but for all those who will believe in me through their message, that they may all be one. Just as you, Father, live in me and I live in you, I am asking that they may live in us, that the world may believe that you did send me. I have given them the honor that you gave me, that they may be one, as we are one - I in them and you in me - that they may grow complete into one, so that the world may realize that you sent me, and have loved them as you loved me. Father, I want those whom you have given me to be with me where I am. I want them to see that glory which you have made mine, for you loved me before the world began.

"Father of goodness and truth, the world has not known you, but I have known you and these men now know that you have sent me. I have made your self known to them and I will continue to do so that the love which you have had for me may be in their hearts and that I may be there also.

In the garden, Jesus was confronted by guards and officers whom Judas Iscariot had brought. Knowing why they were there, Jesus spoke.

"Who are you looking for?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they answered.

"I am the man."

They retreated and fell to the ground. So Jesus asked them again:

"Who are you looking for?"

And again they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

"I have told you that I am the man. If I am the man you are looking for, let these others go."

Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed at the High Priest's servant, cutting off his right ear.

"Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?"

The High Priest interrogated Jesus about his disciples and about his own teaching.

"I have always spoken quite openly to the world. I have always taught in the synagogue or in the Temple where all the Jews meet together, and I have said nothing in secret. Why do you question me? Why not question those who have heard me about what I said to them? Obviously they are the ones who know what I actually said."

An officer slapped Jesus with his open hand. "Is that the way for you to answer the High Priest?"

"If I have said anything wrong you must give evidence about it, but if what I said was true, why do you strike me?"

Pilate called Jesus to him. "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"Are you asking this of your own accord, or have other people spoken to you about me?"

"Do you think I am a Jew?" replied Pilate. "It's your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What have you done, anyway?"

"My kingdom is not founded in this world. If it were, my servants would have fought to prevent my being handed over to the Jews. But in fact my kingdom is not founded on all this!"

"So you are a king, are you?" returned Pilate.

"Indeed I am a king. The reason for my birth and the reason for my coming into the world is to witness to the truth. Every man who loves truth recognizes my voice."

Pilate said to him, "Won't you speak to me? Don't you realize that I have the power to set you free, and I have the power to have you crucified?"

"You have no power at all against me except what was given to you from above. And for that reason the one who handed me over to you is even guiltier than you are."

Jesus was crucified. Realizing that everything was now completed, he said:

"I am thirsty."

There was a bowl of sour wine standing there. So they soaked a sponge in the wine, put it on a spear, and pushed it up towards his mouth. When Jesus had taken it, he cried:

"It is finished!"

And he died.

Mary cried outside the tomb. Jesus' body was gone. Then she turned and noticed Jesus standing there, without realizing that it was Jesus.

"Why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

"Oh sir, if you have carried him away please tell me where you have put him."

"Mary!"

At this she turned right round and said to him, "Master!"

"No! Do not hold me now. I have not yet gone up to the Father. Go and tell my brothers that I am going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

And Mary of Magdala went off to the disciples, with the news, "I have seen the Lord!"

Later the disciples met with doors locked for fear of the Jews, when Jesus came and said:

"Peace be with you!"

Showing them his hands and his side, the disciples were overjoyed.

"Yes, peace be with you! Just as the Father sent me, so I am now going to send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive any men's sins, they are forgiven, and if you hold them unforgiven, they are unforgiven."

But Thomas was not with them when Jesus came and so he didn't believe it. But a week later, Jesus came and stood in the middle of them and said:

"Peace be with you! Put your fingers here, Thomas. Look, here are my hands. Take my hand and put it in my side. You must not doubt, but believe."

"My Lord and my God!" cried Thomas.

"Is it because you have seen me that you believe? Happy are those who have never seen me and yet have believed!"

On the shore of Lake Tiberius, Jesus appeared to the disciples again when they were fishing. From the beach he called out:

"Have you caught anything, lads?"

"No," they replied.

"Throw the net on the right side of the boat and you'll have a catch."

When they came to shore, they saw that a charcoal fire was burning, with a fish placed on it, and some bread.

"Bring me some of the fish you've just caught."

A large number of fish were in the net.

"Come and have your breakfast."

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter:

"Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others?"

"Yes, Lord," he replied, "you know that I am your friend."

"Then feed my lambs."

And again, Jesus said:

"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

"Yes, Lord," returned Peter.

"Then care for my sheep,"

And once more, Jesus said:

"Simon, son of John, are you my friend?"

"Lord, you know everything. You know that I am your friend!"

"Then feed my sheep. I tell you truly, Peter, that when you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go where you liked, but when you are an old man, you are going to stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and take you where you do not want to go. You must follow me."

V
From the Acts of the Apostles

On one occasion, Jesus said to his apostles, while he was eating a meal with them:

"You have already heard me speak about this, for John used to baptize with water, but before many days are passed you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

The apostles gathered together and asked, "Lord, is this the time when you are going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

"You cannot know times and dates which have been fixed by the Father's sole authority. But you are to be given power when the Holy Spirit has come to you. You will be witnesses to me, not only in Jerusalem, not only throughout Judea, not only in Samaria, but to the very ends of the earth!"

Saul, on his journey near Damascus, suddenly saw a light from Heaven blaze around him, and he fell to the ground. Then he heard a voice:

"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

"Who are you, Lord?" he asked, blinded.

"I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but now stand up and go into the city and there you will be told what you must do."

Now in Damascus, the Lord spoke to Ananias and said:

"Get up and go down to the street called Straight, and enquire at the house of Judas for a man named Saul from Tarsus. At this moment he is praying and he sees in his mind's eye a man by the name of Ananias coming into the house, and placing his hands upon him to restore his sight."

But Ananias replied, "Lord, he has done much harm to your holy people in Jerusalem!"

"Go on your way, for this man is my chosen instrument to bear my name before the Gentiles and their kings, as well as to the sons of Israel. Indeed, I myself will show him what he must suffer for the sake of my name."
