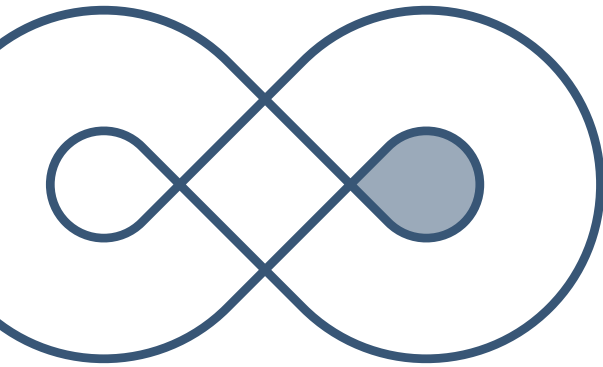


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MATTHEW Z. CAPPS, GENERAL EDITOR



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AUTHOR	AUDIENCE	DATE	PURPOSE	THEMES
Matthew, also called Levi	Greek-speaking Jews	Between AD 50 and 70	Matthew wrote his Gospel to reveal Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah in fulfillment of God's promises to the Jewish people.	The Old Testament fulfilled; the kingdom of heaven; Jesus as King; and kingdom living

Matthew wrote his Gospel to reveal Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah in fulfillment of God's promises to his people. The book has a decidedly Jewish emphasis, and it is thoroughly rooted in the messianic expectations of the old covenant. As John Wesley noted, "Matthew particularly points out the fulfilling of the prophecies for the conviction of the Jews." Jesus himself quotes from the Hebrew scriptures many times in order to explain his ministry and the new thing that God had begun through him.

The Jewish story is one that constantly points forward, and Matthew brings about its resolution by explaining how Jesus is King and that his kingdom has now arrived—at least in part. From the beginning, Jesus is revealed as the heir of King David, descended from Abraham's lineage. In doing so Matthew establishes Jesus as the rightful King of Israel. Much of the Gospel outlines the contours of Jesus' reign and what it looks like to live under it.

Over 30 times Matthew makes reference to the "kingdom of heaven," a significant term for Jews loaded with messianic expectations. During the time of Jesus, Jews were living under Roman occupation while awaiting a conquering king who would come and fight for them, cleanse the land of their pagan oppressors, and reestablish the throne of David. But Jesus was a different sort of King, and he brought a different sort of kingdom.

Jesus began his ministry with a call to repentance, telling people the kingdom had come near. This kingdom is described as a mustard seed and yeast, small in stature but powerful in growth. It is like a hidden treasure, he said, and people should do all they can to get it.

If Matthew's Gospel is about a kingdom and King, it's also about the kingdom's citizens and how they are called to live under Christ's lordship. The Sermon on the Mount is a famous expression of what it means to live as a member of Christ's kingdom. Such people are poor in spirit; they are mourners and peacemakers; they are meek, hungry and thirsty for righteousness, and pure in heart. The entrance into Christ's kingdom is small

MATTHEW

and narrow, and few find it. Yet it is the way that leads to life. Jesus invites everyone to come, but there is a cost: "If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will find it" (Matt 16:24–25).

One of the unique aspects of Matthew's Gospel account is the sheer number of parables he included. A parable is a rhetorical device Jesus used to teach the truths of God and the kingdom way of living. He would often use a common element from daily life in the first century—dough, nets, farming, a vineyard, a wedding banquet—and tell a short story in order to reveal the secrets of the kingdom.

Theodore of Mopsuestia explained: "It was frequently his habit to make use of parables for at least two reasons: Because he would be speaking about things unseen, so as, by the parable, to make invisible things seen, as far as this was possible. Or it was because of the unworthiness of the hearers, when nothing beneficial would come to them from the things that were said."

In other words, Jesus made the mysteries of heaven known using down-to-earth symbols but also made those mysteries more difficult to comprehend for people who were not truly interested in understanding the ways of God. As John Calvin wrote, "The word of God, in its own nature, is always bright, but its light is choked by the darkness of men." Such is the case with the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew's Gospel was regularly cited by early church fathers seeking to understand the mysteries of Christ and his kingdom and his connection with the Old Testament. May our eyes see and our ears hear what King Jesus tells us about his reign and rule over our lives.

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST

1 This is the record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

²Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³Judah the father of Perez and Zerah (by Tamar), Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, ⁴Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵Salmon the father of Boaz (by Rahab), Boaz the father of Obed (by Ruth), Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶and Jesse the father of David the king.

David was the father of Solomon (by the wife of Uriah), ⁷Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa, ⁸Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, Joram the father of Uzziah, ⁹Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, ¹¹and Josiah the father of Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹²After the deportation to Babylon, Jeconiah became the father of Shealtiel, Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, Abiud the father of Eliakim, Eliakim the father of Azor, ¹⁴Azor the father of Zadok, Zadok the father of Achim, Achim the father of Eliud, ¹⁵Eliud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ.

¹⁷So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to Christ, fourteen generations.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ happened this way. While his mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹Because Joseph, her husband to be, was a righteous man, and because he did not want to disgrace her, he intended to divorce her privately. ²⁰When he had contemplated this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.” ²²This all happened so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled: ²³“**Look! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will name him Emmanuel,**” which means “**God with us.**” ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep he did what the angel of the Lord told him. He took his wife, ²⁵but did not have marital relations with her until she gave birth to a son, whom he named Jesus.

THE VISIT OF THE WISE MEN

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, in the time of King Herod, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem ²saying, “Where is the one who is born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³When King Herod heard this he was alarmed, and all Jerusalem with him. ⁴After assembling all the chief priests and experts

1:18–22 Having established Joseph’s faith by all means—by past expectations, by future hopes, by present grace, and by the honor given to himself—the angel then gives expression in support of all these, proclaiming beforehand the good things that are to occur to the world through the Son: Sins are removed once and for all. “He will save his people from their sins.” Here again the coming event exceeds all human expectation. From what are the people being saved? Not from warfare or violent men but something far greater: from their own sins, a work that had never been possible to anyone before.

CHRYSOSTOM (c. 347–407)
HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL
OF MATTHEW

in the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵"In Bethlehem of Judea," they said, "for it is written this way by the prophet:

⁶ *'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are in no way least among the rulers of Judah,
for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my
people Israel.'*"

⁷Then Herod privately summoned the wise men and determined from them when the star had appeared. ⁸He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and look carefully for the child. When you find him, inform me so that I can go and worship him as well." ⁹After listening to the king they left, and once again the star they saw when it rose led them until it stopped above the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw the star they shouted joyfully. ¹¹As they came into the house and saw the child with Mary his mother, they bowed down and worshiped him. They opened their treasure boxes and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²After being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back by another route to their own country.

THE ESCAPE TO EGYPT

¹³After they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to look for the child to kill him." ¹⁴Then he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and went to Egypt. ¹⁵He stayed there until Herod died. In this way what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet was fulfilled: "*I called my Son out of Egypt.*"

¹⁶When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he became enraged. He sent men to kill all the children in Bethlehem and throughout the surrounding region from the age of two and under, according to the time he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

¹⁸ *"A voice was heard in Ramah,
weeping and loud wailing,
Rachel weeping for her children,
and she did not want to be comforted, because they were
gone."*

THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

¹⁹After Herod had died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰saying, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹So he got up and took the child and his mother and returned to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. After being warned in a dream, he went to the regions of Galilee. ²³He came to a town called Nazareth and lived there. Then what had been spoken by the prophets was fulfilled, that Jesus would be called a Nazarene.

THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

3 In those days John the Baptist came into the wilderness of Judea proclaiming, ²"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." ³For he is the one about whom the prophet Isaiah had spoken: *"The voice of one shouting in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord, make his paths straight.'"*

2:1–12 What joy these wise men felt upon this sight of the star. None know so well as those who, after a long and melancholy night of temptation and desertion, under the power of a spirit of bondage, at length receive the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with their spirits that they are the children of God . . . The gifts the wise men presented were gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Providence sent these as a seasonable relief to Joseph and Mary in their present poor condition. Thus our heavenly Father, who knows what his children need, uses some as stewards to supply the wants of others and can provide for them even from the ends of the earth.

MATTHEW HENRY (1662–1714)
COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

3:1–12 “Don’t think that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our Father.’” Rightly did our Lord bear witness to him, saying, “Your father Abraham was overjoyed to see my day, and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). For not alone upon Abraham’s account did he say these things, but also that he might point out how all who have known God from the beginning and have foretold the advent of Christ have received the revelation from the Son himself. He also in the last times was made visible and passable and spoke with the human race that he might from the stones raise up children unto Abraham and fulfill the promise that God had given him.

IRENÆUS (c. 130–c. 202)
AGAINST HERESIES

⁴Now John wore clothing made from camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his diet consisted of locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then people from Jerusalem, as well as all Judea and all the region around the Jordan, were going out to him, ⁶and he was baptizing them in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.

⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You offspring of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Therefore produce fruit that proves your repentance, ⁹and don’t think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you that God can raise up children for Abraham from these stones! ¹⁰Even now the ax is laid at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹“I baptize you with water, for repentance, but the one coming after me is more powerful than I am—I am not worthy to carry his sandals! He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clean out his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the storehouse, but the chaff he will burn up with inextinguishable fire!”

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to John to be baptized by him in the Jordan River. ¹⁴But John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?” ¹⁵So Jesus replied to him, “Let it happen now, for it is right for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John yielded to him. ¹⁶After Jesus was baptized, just as he was coming up out of the water, the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, “This is my one dear Son; in him I take great delight.”

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²After he fasted 40 days and 40 nights he was famished. ³The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread.” ⁴But he answered, “It is written, ‘*Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.*’” ⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city, had him stand on the highest point of the temple, ⁶and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written, ‘*He will command his angels concerning you*’ and ‘*with their hands they will lift you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.*’” ⁷Jesus said to him, “Once again it is written: ‘*You are not to put the Lord your God to the test.*’” ⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their grandeur. ⁹And he said to him, “I will give you all these things if you throw yourself to the ground and worship me.” ¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, “Go away, Satan! For it is written: ‘*You are to worship the Lord your God and serve only him.*’” ¹¹Then the devil left him, and angels came and began ministering to his needs.

PREACHING IN GALILEE

¹²Now when Jesus heard that John had been imprisoned, he went into Galilee. ¹³While in Galilee, he moved from Nazareth to make his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of

Zebulun and Naphtali,¹⁴ so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah would be fulfilled:

¹⁵ *“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
the way by the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the
Gentiles—*

¹⁶ *the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light,
and on those who sit in the region and shadow of death a
light has dawned.”*

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach this message: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near!”

THE CALL OF THE DISCIPLES

¹⁸ As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon (called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishermen).¹⁹ He said to them, “Follow me, and I will turn you into fishers of people!”²⁰ They left their nets immediately and followed him.²¹ Going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and his brother John, in a boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. Then he called them.²² They immediately left the boat and their father and followed him.

JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY

²³ Jesus went throughout all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness among the people.²⁴ So a report about him spread throughout Syria. People brought to him all who suffered with various illnesses and afflictions, those who had seizures, paralytics, and those possessed by demons, and he healed them.²⁵ And large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan River.

THE BEATITUDES

5 When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain. After he sat down his disciples came to him.² Then he began to teach them by saying:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

¹¹ Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you falsely on account of me.¹² Rejoice and be glad because your reward is great in heaven, for they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way.

SALT AND LIGHT

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its flavor, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything

4:18–21 Our Lord summoned to his side the fishing brothers whom he had chosen from of old. They were busy in a lawful occupation when he called them to be ministers. Our Lord does not call idlers. His word was imperial: “Follow me.” His work was appropriate and full of royal promise—“I will turn you into fishers of people!” From this passage we learn that nobody can make a people-fisher but our Lord himself and that those whom he calls can become successful only by following him. No nets can entangle those whom Jesus calls to follow him.

CHARLES SPURGEON
(1834–1892)
METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE
SERMONS

except to be thrown out and trampled on by people! ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵People do not light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before people, so that they can see your good deeds and give honor to your Father in heaven.

5:17–20 Since we are unable to keep the law and it is impossible for the natural man to do so, Christ came and stepped between the Father and us and prays for us: *Beloved Father, be gracious unto them and forgive them their sins. I will take upon me their transgressions and bear them; I love you with my whole heart, and in addition the entire human race, and this I will prove by shedding my blood for human-kind. Moreover, I have fulfilled the law and I did it for their welfare in order that they may partake of my fulfilling the law and thereby come to grace.*

MARTIN LUTHER (1483–1546)
THE CHURCH POSTIL

FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW AND PROPHETS

¹⁷“Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish these things but to fulfill them. ¹⁸I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth pass away not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter will pass from the law until everything takes place. ¹⁹So anyone who breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever obeys them and teaches others to do so will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness goes beyond that of the experts in the law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven!

ANGER AND MURDER

²¹“You have heard that it was said to an older generation, ‘**Do not murder,**’ and ‘whoever murders will be subjected to judgment.’ ²²But I say to you that anyone who is angry with a brother will be subjected to judgment. And whoever insults a brother will be brought before the council, and whoever says ‘Fool’ will be sent to fiery hell. ²³So then, if you bring your gift to the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother and then come and present your gift. ²⁵Reach agreement quickly with your accuser while on the way to court, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the warden, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶I tell you the truth, you will never get out of there until you have paid the last penny!

ADULTERY

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘**Do not commit adultery,**’ ²⁸But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to desire her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away! It is better to lose one of your members than to have your whole body thrown into hell. ³⁰If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away! It is better to lose one of your members than to have your whole body go into hell.

DIVORCE

³¹“It was said, ‘**Whoever divorces his wife must give her a legal document.**’ ³²But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

OATHS

³³“Again, you have heard that it was said to an older generation, ‘**Do not break an oath, but fulfill your vows to the Lord.**’ ³⁴But I say to you, do not take oaths at all—not by heaven because it is the throne of God, ³⁵not by earth because it is his footstool, and not by Jerusalem because it is the city of the great King.

³⁶Do not take an oath by your head because you are not able to make one hair white or black. ³⁷Let your word be ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no.’ More than this is from the evil one.

RETALIATION

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.*’ ³⁹But I say to you, do not resist the evildoer. But whoever strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other to him as well. ⁴⁰And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your coat also. ⁴¹And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two. ⁴²Give to the one who asks you, and do not reject the one who wants to borrow from you.

LOVE FOR ENEMIES

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘*Love your neighbor*’ and ‘*hate your enemy.*’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be like your Father in heaven, since he causes the sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Even the tax collectors do the same, don’t they? ⁴⁷And if you only greet your brothers, what more do you do? Even the Gentiles do the same, don’t they? ⁴⁸So then, be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

PURE-HEARTED GIVING

6 “Be careful not to display your righteousness merely to be seen by people. Otherwise you have no reward with your Father in heaven. ²Thus whenever you do charitable giving, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in synagogues and on streets so that people will praise them. I tell you the truth, they have their reward! ³But when you do your giving, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your gift may be in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

PRIVATE PRAYER

⁵“Whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites because they love to pray while standing in synagogues and on street corners so that people can see them. Truly I say to you, they have their reward! ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. ⁷When you pray, do not babble repetitiously like the Gentiles because they think that by their many words they will be heard. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. ⁹So pray this way:

“Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored,
¹⁰ may your kingdom come,
 may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us today our daily bread,
¹² and forgive us our debts, as we ourselves have forgiven
 our debtors.
¹³ And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from
 the evil one.

¹⁴“For if you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive you your sins.

6:5–8 Prayer is mainly to be addressed to God the Father. Pray to your Father who sees you and specially takes note of that which is evidently meant for him only, seeing it is done “in secret,” where no eye can see but his own. As the very soul of prayer lies in communion with God, we shall pray best when all our attention is confined to him, and we shall best reach our end of being accepted by him when we have no regard for the opinion of anyone else. Secret prayer is truly heard and openly answered in the Lord’s own way and time. Our King reigns “in secret”: there he sets up his court, and there will he welcome our approaches. We are not where God sees when we court publicity and pray to obtain credit for our devotion.

CHARLES SPURGEON
 (1834–1892)
 METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE
 SERMONS

PROPER FASTING

¹⁶“When you fast, do not look sullen like the hypocrites, for they make their faces unattractive so that people will see them fasting. I tell you the truth, they have their reward! ¹⁷When you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it will not be obvious to others when you are fasting, but only to your Father who is in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

LASTING TREASURE

¹⁹“Do not accumulate for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and devouring insect destroy and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But accumulate for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and devouring insect do not destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²²“The eye is the lamp of the body. If then your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eye is diseased, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

²⁴“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

DO NOT WORRY

²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t there more to life than food and more to the body than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds in the sky: They do not sow, or reap, or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you more valuable than they are? ²⁷And which of you by worrying can add even one hour to his life? ²⁸Why do you worry about clothing? Think about how the flowers of the field grow; they do not work or spin. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was clothed like one of these! ³⁰And if this is how God clothes the wild grass, which is here today and tomorrow is tossed into the fire to heat the oven, won’t he clothe you even more, you people of little faith? ³¹So then, don’t worry saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ ³²For the unconverted pursue these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

³³But above all pursue his kingdom and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴So then, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Today has enough trouble of its own.

DO NOT JUDGE

7 “Do not judge so that you will not be judged. ²For by the standard you judge you will be judged, and the measure you use will be the measure you receive. ³Why do you see the speck in your brother’s eye, but fail to see the beam of wood in your own? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye,’ while there is a beam in your own? ⁵You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. ⁶Do not give what is holy to dogs or throw your pearls before pigs; otherwise they will trample them under their feet and turn around and tear you to pieces.

7:1–6 Our Lord now proceeds to warn us against the chief hindrances of holiness. And how wisely does he begin with judging? Judge not anyone without full, clear, certain knowledge, without absolute necessity, without tender love. With what measure you use, it shall be measured to you! So we may choose for ourselves whether God shall be severe or merciful to us: God and man will favor the candid and benevolent, but they must expect judgment without mercy who have shown no mercy. In particular, why do you open your eyes to any fault of others while you yourself are guilty of a much greater? It is mere hypocrisy to pretend zeal for the amendment of others while we have none for our own.

ASK, SEEK, KNOCK

⁷“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹Is there anyone among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹If you then, although you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! ¹²In everything, treat others as you would want them to treat you, for this fulfills the law and the prophets.

THE NARROW GATE

¹³“Enter through the narrow gate because the gate is wide and the way is spacious that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴How narrow is the gate and difficult the way that leads to life, and there are few who find it!

A TREE AND ITS FRUIT

¹⁵“Watch out for false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are voracious wolves. ¹⁶You will recognize them by their fruit. Grapes are not gathered from thorns or figs from thistles, are they? ¹⁷In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree is not able to bear bad fruit, nor a bad tree to bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰So then, you will recognize them by their fruit.

JUDGMENT OF PRETENDERS

²¹“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the kingdom of heaven—only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. ²²On that day, many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many powerful deeds in your name?’ ²³Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you. Go away from me, you lawbreakers!’

HEARING AND DOING

²⁴“Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them is like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵The rain fell, the flood came, and the winds beat against that house, but it did not collapse because its foundation had been laid on rock. ²⁶Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain fell, the flood came, and the winds beat against that house, and it collapsed—it was utterly destroyed!”

²⁸When Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed by his teaching, ²⁹because he taught them like one who had authority, not like their experts in the law.

CLEANSING A LEPER

8 After he came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him. ²And a leper approached and bowed low before him, saying, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” ³He stretched out his hand and touched him saying, “I am willing. Be clean!” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, “See that you do not speak to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest, and bring the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

8:5–13 It was a firm persuasion that all power and authority were eminently in Christ and that he could do what he pleased. The great end of Christ in all his miracles was to discover himself to be the Son of God and so by consequence that true Messiah and Savior of the world. Now this centurion, being firmly persuaded of a divine power and authority in Christ, reasoned notably, “Just say the word and my servant will be healed.” Here then was the greatness of his faith. The Spirit of God can bless slender motives to a willing heart, and there is a readiness in holy souls to believe sooner and easier than others. Faith is most high when the heart is most low.

THOMAS MANTON
(1620–1677)
THE COMPLETE WORKS

HEALING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

⁵When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him asking for help: ⁶“Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible anguish.” ⁷Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” ⁸But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof! Instead, just say the word and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave ‘Do this!’ and he does it.” ¹⁰When Jesus heard this he was amazed and said to those who followed him, “I tell you the truth, I have not found such faith in anyone in Israel! ¹¹I tell you, many will come from the east and west to share the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹²but the sons of the kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” ¹³Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go; just as you believed, it will be done for you.” And the servant was healed at that hour.

HEALINGS AT PETER'S HOUSE

¹⁴Now when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying down, sick with a fever. ¹⁵He touched her hand, and the fever left her. Then she got up and began to serve them. ¹⁶When it was evening, many demon-possessed people were brought to him. He drove out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick. ¹⁷In this way what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah was fulfilled:

“He took our weaknesses and carried our diseases.”

CHALLENGING PROFESSED FOLLOWERS

¹⁸Now when Jesus saw a large crowd around him, he gave orders to go to the other side of the lake. ¹⁹Then an expert in the law came to him and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” ²⁰Jesus said to him, “Foxes have dens, and the birds in the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” ²¹Another of the disciples said to him, “Lord, let me first go and bury my father.” ²²But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

STILLING OF A STORM

²³As he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴And a great storm developed on the sea so that the waves began to swamp the boat. But he was asleep. ²⁵So they came and woke him up saying, “Lord, save us! We are about to die!” ²⁶But he said to them, “Why are you cowardly, you people of little faith?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it was dead calm. ²⁷And the men were amazed and said, “What sort of person is this? Even the winds and the sea obey him!”

HEALING THE GADARENE DEMONIACS

²⁸When he came to the other side, to the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were extremely violent, so that no one was able to pass by that way. ²⁹They cried out, “Son of God, leave us alone! Have you come here to torment us before the time?” ³⁰A large herd of pigs was feeding some distance from them. ³¹Then the demons begged him, “If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.” ³²And he said, “Go!” So they came out and went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep slope into the lake and drowned in the water. ³³The herdsmen ran off, went into the

town, and told everything that had happened to the demon-possessed men.³⁴ Then the entire town came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.

HEALING AND FORGIVING A PARALYTIC

9 After getting into a boat he crossed to the other side and came to his own town.² Just then some people brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Have courage, son! Your sins are forgiven.”³ Then some of the experts in the law said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming!”⁴ When Jesus perceived their thoughts he said, “Why do you respond with evil in your hearts?⁵ Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk’?⁶ But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—then he said to the paralytic—“Stand up, take your stretcher, and go home.”⁷ So he stood up and went home.⁸ When the crowd saw this, they were afraid and honored God who had given such authority to men.

THE CALL OF MATTHEW; EATING WITH SINNERS

⁹ As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax booth. “Follow me,” he said to him. So he got up and followed him.¹⁰ As Jesus was having a meal in Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Jesus and his disciples.¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”¹² When Jesus heard this he said, “Those who are healthy don’t need a physician, but those who are sick do.¹³ Go and learn what this saying means: *‘I want mercy and not sacrifice.’* For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

THE SUPERIORITY OF THE NEW

¹⁴ Then John’s disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples don’t fast?”¹⁵ Jesus said to them, “The wedding guests cannot mourn while the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days are coming when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast.¹⁶ No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment because the patch will pull away from the garment and the tear will be worse.¹⁷ And no one pours new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the skins burst and the wine is spilled out and the skins are destroyed. Instead they put new wine into new wineskins and both are preserved.”

RESTORATION AND HEALING

¹⁸ As he was saying these things, a leader came, bowed low before him, and said, “My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her and she will live.”¹⁹ Jesus and his disciples got up and followed him.²⁰ But a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for 12 years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak.²¹ For she kept saying to herself, “If only I touch his cloak, I will be healed.”²² But when Jesus turned and saw her he said, “Have courage, daughter! Your faith has made you well.” And the woman was healed from that hour.²³ When Jesus entered the leader’s house and saw the flute players and the disorderly crowd,²⁴ he said, “Go away, for the girl is not dead but asleep!” And they began making fun of him.²⁵ But when the crowd had been forced outside, he went in and gently took her by the hand, and the girl got up.²⁶ And the news of this spread throughout that region.

9:1–8 Do you see how Jesus is shown to be Creator of both souls and bodies? He heals the paralysis in both soul and body. The healing of the soul is made evident through the healing of the body, even while the body still remains a creature crawling on the ground. The crowds were slow to recognize who he was. He proceeded by his daily actions to arouse them and lift up their thinking. It would have been no small thing for him to be thought greater than all others, as having come from God. If they had established this adequately in their own minds, they would have known in due order that he was indeed the Son of God. But they did not grasp these things clearly. Because of this they did not come close to recognizing who he was.

CHRYSOSTOM (c. 347–407)
HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

HEALING THE BLIND AND MUTE

²⁷As Jesus went on from there, two blind men began to follow him, shouting, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” ²⁸When he went into the house, the blind men came to him. Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to him, “Yes, Lord.”

²⁹Then he touched their eyes saying, “Let it be done for you according to your faith.” ³⁰And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly warned them, “See that no one knows about this!” ³¹But they went out and spread the news about him throughout that entire region.

³²As they were going away, a man who was demon-possessed and unable to speak was brought to him. ³³After the demon was cast out, the man who had been mute began to speak. The crowds were amazed and said, “Never has anything like this been seen in Israel!” ³⁴But the Pharisees said, “By the ruler of demons he casts out demons!”

WORKERS FOR THE HARVEST

³⁵Then Jesus went throughout all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

³⁷Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. ³⁸Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest-ready fields.”

SENDING OUT THE 12 APOSTLES

10 Jesus called his 12 disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits so they could cast them out and heal every kind of disease and sickness. ²Now these are the names of the 12 apostles: first, Simon (called Peter), and Andrew his brother; James son of Zebedee and John his brother; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

⁵Jesus sent out these 12, instructing them as follows: “Do not go on a road that leads to Gentile regions and do not enter any Samaritan town. ⁶Go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, preach this message: “The kingdom of heaven is near!” ⁸Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. ⁹Do not take gold, silver, or copper in your belts; ¹⁰no bag for the journey; or an extra tunic or sandals or staff; for the worker deserves his provisions.

¹¹Whenever you enter a town or village, find out who is worthy there and stay with them until you leave. ¹²As you enter the house, greet those within it. ¹³And if the house is worthy, let your peace come on it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

¹⁴And if anyone will not welcome you or listen to your message, shake the dust off your feet as you leave that house or that town.

¹⁵I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for the region of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town!

PERSECUTION OF DISCIPLES

¹⁶“I am sending you out like sheep surrounded by wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷Beware of people, because they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues. ¹⁸And you will be brought before governors and kings because of me, as a witness to them and to the Gentiles.

¹⁹Whenever they hand you over for trial, do not worry about

10:1–15 What kind of people were these disciples? Fishermen and publicans. These “Jesus sent”! Do you perceive the unparalleled magnificence of their ministry? They spoke of new and strange things. Moses and the prophets spoke of temporal promises of an earthly land. The apostles proclaimed the kingdom of heaven and all that this implies. Not only does the loftiness of their message characterize them as greater but also so does the lowly nature of their obedience. They were not reluctant nor irresolute, like those who came before. Instead, warned as they were of perils, wars, and intolerable evils, they received his commands with simple obedience. They immediately became heralds of the coming kingdom.

CHRYSOSTOM (c. 347–407)
HOMILIES ON THE GOSPEL
OF MATTHEW

JOHN CALVIN:

HERO OF REFORMED THEOLOGY

1509–1564

Other than perhaps Martin Luther, no name is as closely associated with the Protestant Reformation than that of John Calvin. Reformed and Calvinist theology, though not entirely synonymous, are sometimes used interchangeably, revealing the sizable influence the man had during his time and his lasting legacy as a hero of the development and systematization of the Reformation's theology.

Calvin was born into a deeply religious family in 1509 near Noyon, France, where his father was a lawyer for the well-known city cathedral and secretary to the bishop. He received an excellent education from the University of Paris as a teenager, studying philosophy and law before devoting his academic work to theology. During this time he joined a group of French humanists who had been influenced by Erasmus before embracing the Reformation cause in the early 1530s. He described his conversion to Protestantism in this way:

What happened first was that by an unexpected conversion, God tamed and made teachable a mind too stubborn for its years. For I was obstinately addicted to the superstitions of the papacy and nothing less could draw me out of so deep a quagmire. And so this mere taste of true godliness that I received set me on fire.

In short time he fled to Basel under threat of the French Catholic persecution. It was there that he began the work for which he is most known, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The work made an

immediate impression on the European church embroiled in ecclesial revolution. Initially, he meant it as a six-chapter summary of the essence of the Christian faith, but it eventually ballooned to eighty chapters in its final 1559 form. His magnum opus covered a range of theological topics, including the knowledge of God; the freewill of man; an explanation of the Apostles' Creed; predestination and providence; the sacraments, including baptism and the Lord's Supper and a rejection of the "five false ones"; the church and Christian life; and, of course, justification, grace, faith, and meritorious works.

Calvin explained the benefit of his project:

Although the holy scripture contains perfect teaching to which nothing can be added, because our Lord has chosen to unfold the infinite treasures of his wisdom in it; nevertheless, someone who does not have very much practice in using it needs some guidance and direction to know what to look for in it in order not to go astray and wander here and there but to keep a certain path, so as to arrive finally where the Holy Spirit calls him . . . I exhort all who revere the Word of the Lord to read this and impress it in their memory with diligence, if they want first to have a summary of Christian teaching and then an entry point to profit well in reading the Old as well as the New Testament.

Calvin's *Institutes* became the go-to theological textbook for the

Reformed Christian community, enduring for generations. It has been translated and published multiple times and continues to play a vital

role in the theological discussions of the church—making Calvin not merely a hero of Reformed theology but a hero of the faith.

IMPORTANT WORKS

INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION
BIBLE COMMENTARIES

lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news proclaimed to them ⁶—and blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me!”

⁷While they were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Look, those who wear soft clothing are in the palaces of kings! ⁹What did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet! ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written:

*“Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.”*

¹¹“I tell you the truth, among those born of women, no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is! ¹²From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and forceful people lay hold of it. ¹³For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John appeared. ¹⁴And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah, who is to come. ¹⁵The one who has ears had better listen!

¹⁶“To what should I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces who call out to one another,

¹⁷ “We played the flute for you, yet you did not dance;
we wailed in mourning, yet you did not weep.”

¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon!’ ¹⁹The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him, a glutton and a drunk, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

WOES ON UNREPENTANT CITIES

²⁰Then Jesus began to criticize openly the cities in which he had done many of his miracles because they did not repent. ²¹“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you! ²³And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be thrown down to Hades! For if the miracles done among you had been done in Sodom, it would have continued to this day. ²⁴But I tell you, it will be more bearable for the region of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you!”

11:25–30 From the very first moment of your spiritual life until you are ushered into glory, Christ's words to you will be: "Come to me." Just as a mother holds out her arms, urging her child to walk by saying, "Come," Jesus does the same. He will always be ahead, bidding you to follow him as a soldier follows his general. He will forever walk before you, paving your way and clearing your path, and you will hear his life-giving voice calling you to follow throughout your days. Even at your solemn hour of death, his sweet words ushering you into his heavenly world will be, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father" (Matt 25:34).

CHARLES SPURGEON
(1834–1892)
MORNING AND EVENING

JESUS' INVITATION

²⁵At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to little children. ²⁶Yes, Father, for this was your gracious will. ²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son decides to reveal him. ²⁸Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke on you and learn from me because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy to bear, and my load is not hard to carry."

LORD OF THE SABBATH

12 At that time Jesus went through the grain fields on a Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and they began to pick heads of wheat and eat them. ²But when the Pharisees saw this they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is against the law to do on the Sabbath." ³He said to them, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry—⁴how he entered the house of God and ate the sacred bread, which was against the law for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests? ⁵Or have you not read in the law that the priests in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are not guilty? ⁶I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷If you had known what this means: '*I want mercy and not sacrifice,*' you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸For the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

⁹Then Jesus left that place and entered their synagogue. ¹⁰A man was there who had a withered hand. And they asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" so that they could accuse him. ¹¹He said to them, "Would not any one of you, if he had one sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, take hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." ¹³Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out and it was restored, as healthy as the other. ¹⁴But the Pharisees went out and plotted against him, as to how they could assassinate him.

GOD'S SPECIAL SERVANT

¹⁵Now when Jesus learned of this, he went away from there. Great crowds followed him, and he healed them all. ¹⁶But he sternly warned them not to make him known. ¹⁷This fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

¹⁸ "*Here is my servant whom I have chosen,
the one I love, in whom I take great delight.
I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to
the nations.*

¹⁹ *He will not quarrel or cry out,
nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets.*

²⁰ *He will not break a bruised reed or extinguish a
smoldering wick,
until he brings justice to victory.*

²¹ *And in his name the Gentiles will hope."*

JESUS AND BEELZEBUL

²²Then they brought to him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute. Jesus healed him so that he could speak and

see.²³ All the crowds were amazed and said, “Could this one be the Son of David?”²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard this they said, “He does not cast out demons except by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons!”²⁵ Now when Jesus realized what they were thinking, he said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is destroyed, and no town or house divided against itself will stand.²⁶ So if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?²⁷ And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges.²⁸ But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has already overtaken you.²⁹ How else can someone enter a strong man’s house and steal his property, unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can thoroughly plunder the house.³⁰ Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.³¹ For this reason I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.³² Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

TREES AND THEIR FRUIT

³³“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is known by its fruit.³⁴ Offspring of vipers! How are you able to say anything good, since you are evil? For the mouth speaks from what fills the heart.³⁵ The good person brings good things out of his good treasury, and the evil person brings evil things out of his evil treasury.³⁶ I tell you that on the day of judgment, people will give an account for every worthless word they speak.³⁷ For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

THE SIGN OF JONAH

³⁸Then some of the experts in the law along with some Pharisees answered him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.”³⁹ But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.⁴⁰ For just as Jonah was *in the belly of the huge fish for three days and three nights*, so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.⁴¹ The people of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it because they repented when Jonah preached to them—and now, something greater than Jonah is here!⁴² The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon—and now, something greater than Solomon is here!

THE RETURN OF THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT

⁴³“When an unclean spirit goes out of a person, it passes through waterless places looking for rest but does not find it.⁴⁴ Then it says, ‘I will return to the home I left.’ When it returns, it finds the house empty, swept clean, and put in order.⁴⁵ Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there, so the last state of that person is worse than the first. It will be that way for this evil generation as well!”

12:46–50 Jesus’ design is to bestow the highest commendation on faith, which is the source and origin of holy obedience and at the same time covers the defects and sins of the flesh that they may not be imputed. Let us perform all that nature can justly claim, and at the same time not be too strongly attached to flesh and blood. As Christ bestows on the disciples of his gospel the inestimable honor of being reckoned as his family, we must be held guilty of the basest ingratitude if we do not disregard all the desires of the flesh and direct every effort toward this object.

JOHN CALVIN (1509–1564)
COMPLETE COMMENTARY
ON THE BIBLE

JESUS’ TRUE FAMILY

⁴⁶While Jesus was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and brothers came and stood outside, asking to speak to him. ⁴⁷Someone told him, “Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside wanting to speak to you.” ⁴⁸To the one who had said this, Jesus replied, “Who is my mother and who are my brothers?” ⁴⁹And pointing toward his disciples he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

13 On that day after Jesus went out of the house, he sat by the lake. ²And such a large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat to sit while the whole crowd stood on the shore. ³He told them many things in parables, saying: “Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground where they did not have much soil. They sprang up quickly because the soil was not deep. ⁶But when the sun came up, they were scorched, and because they did not have sufficient root, they withered. ⁷Other seeds fell among the thorns, and they grew up and choked them. ⁸But other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty. ⁹The one who has ears had better listen!”

¹⁰Then the disciples came to him and said, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” ¹¹He replied, “You have been given the opportunity to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but they have not. ¹²For whoever has will be given more, and will have an abundance. But whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ¹³For this reason I speak to them in parables: Although they see they do not see, and although they hear they do not hear nor do they understand. ¹⁴And concerning them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

*“You will listen carefully yet will never understand,
you will look closely yet will never comprehend.*

¹⁵ *For the heart of this people has become dull;
they are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes,
so that they would not see with their eyes
and hear with their ears
and understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.’*

¹⁶“But your eyes are blessed because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

¹⁸“So listen to the parable of the sower: ¹⁹When anyone hears the word about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches what was sown in his heart; this is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰The seed sown on rocky ground is the person who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. ²¹But he has no root in himself and does not endure; when trouble or persecution comes because of the word, immediately he falls away. ²²The seed sown among thorns is the person who hears the word, but worldly cares and the seductiveness of wealth choke the word, so it produces nothing. ²³But as for the seed sown on good soil, this is the person who hears the word and understands. He bears fruit, yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown.”

THE PARABLE OF THE WEEDS

²⁴He presented them with another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a person who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵But while everyone was sleeping, an enemy came and sowed darnel among the wheat and went away. ²⁶When the plants sprouted and produced grain, then the darnel also appeared. ²⁷So the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Then where did the darnel come from?’ ²⁸He said, ‘An enemy has done this!’ So the slaves replied, ‘Do you want us to go and gather it?’ ²⁹But he said, ‘No, since in gathering the darnel you may uproot the wheat along with it. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I will tell the reapers, “First collect the darnel and tie it in bundles to be burned, but then gather the wheat into my barn.””

13:24–43 Though gross transgressors and such as openly oppose the gospel ought to be separated from the society of the faithful, yet no human skill can make an exact separation. Those who oppose must not be cut off but instructed, and that with meekness. And though good and bad are together in this world, yet at the great day they shall be parted. Then the righteous and the wicked shall be plainly known; here sometimes it is hard to distinguish between them. Let us, knowing the terrors of the Lord, not do iniquity. At death, believers shall shine forth to themselves; at the great day they shall shine forth before all the world. May we be found of that happy number.

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

³¹He gave them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. ³²It is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest garden plant and becomes a tree, so that the wild birds come and nest in its branches.”

MATTHEW HENRY (1662–1714)
COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE

THE PARABLE OF THE YEAST

³³He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of flour until all the dough had risen.”

THE PURPOSE OF PARABLES

³⁴Jesus spoke all these things in parables to the crowds; he did not speak to them without a parable. ³⁵This fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet:

*“I will open my mouth in parables,
I will announce what has been hidden from the
foundation of the world.”*

EXPLANATION FOR THE DISCIPLES

³⁶Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him saying, “Explain to us the parable of the darnel in the field.” ³⁷He answered, “The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world and the good seed are the people of the kingdom. The poisonous weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰As the poisonous weeds are collected and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather from his kingdom everything that causes sin as well as all lawbreakers. ⁴²They will **throw them into the fiery furnace**, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then *the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father*. The one who has ears had better listen!

PARABLES ON THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure, hidden in a field, that a person found and hid. Then because of joy he went and sold all that he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he found a pearl of great value, he went out and sold everything he had and bought it.

⁴⁷“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea that caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸When it was full, they pulled it ashore, sat down, and put the good fish into containers and threw the bad away. ⁴⁹It will be this way at the end of the age. Angels will come and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and *throw them into the fiery furnace*, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹“Have you understood all these things?” They replied, “Yes.” ⁵²Then he said to them, “Therefore every expert in the law who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and old.”

REJECTION AT NAZARETH

⁵³Now when Jesus finished these parables, he moved on from there. ⁵⁴Then he came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue. They were astonished and said, “Where did this man get such wisdom and miraculous powers? ⁵⁵Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? Isn’t his mother named Mary? And aren’t his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶And aren’t all his sisters here with us? So where did he get all this?” ⁵⁷And so they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own house.” ⁵⁸And he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

14 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard reports about Jesus, ²and he said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist. He has been raised from the dead! And because of this, miraculous powers are at work in him.” ³For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, ⁴because John had repeatedly told him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.” ⁵Although Herod wanted to kill John, he feared the crowd because they accepted John as a prophet. ⁶But on Herod’s birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, ⁷so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. ⁸Instructed by her mother, she said, “Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter.” ⁹Although it grieved the king because of his oath and the dinner guests, he commanded it to be given. ¹⁰So he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. ¹¹His head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. ¹²Then John’s disciples came and took the body and buried it and went and told Jesus.

THE FEEDING OF THE 5,000

¹³Now when Jesus heard this he went away from there privately in a boat to an isolated place. But when the crowd heard about it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴As he got out he saw the large crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵When evening arrived, his disciples came to him saying, “This is an isolated place and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away so that they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” ¹⁶But he replied, “They don’t need to go. You give them something to eat.” ¹⁷They said to him, “We have here only five loaves and two fish.” ¹⁸“Bring them here to me,” he replied. ¹⁹Then he instructed the crowds to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and two fish, and looking up to heaven he gave thanks and broke the loaves. He gave them

14:13–21 Observe with what discretion the Teacher draws the disciples toward believing. “You give them something to eat.” At this point their regard for him was essentially as to a man. In this miracle Jesus was teaching them humility, temperance, charity, to be of like mind toward one another, and to share all things in common. He did so in his choice of location, by providing nothing more than loaves and fishes, by setting the same food before all and having them share it in common. Jesus indeed permitted the crowds to get hungry in order that no one might suppose what took place to be as illusion. For this purpose he also caused just twelve baskets to remain over, that Judas too might bear one. He wanted all the disciples to know his power. He fed their hunger.

to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowds.²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the broken pieces left over, 12 baskets full.²¹ Not counting women and children, there were about 5,000 men who ate.

WALKING ON WATER

²²Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dispersed the crowds.²³ And after he sent the crowds away, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.²⁴ Meanwhile the boat, already far from land, was taking a beating from the waves because the wind was against it.²⁵ As the night was ending, Jesus came to them walking on the sea.²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the water they were terrified and said, "It's a ghost!" and cried out with fear.²⁷ But immediately Jesus spoke to them: "Have courage! It is I. Do not be afraid."²⁸ Peter said to him, "Lord, if it is you, order me to come to you on the water."²⁹ So he said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat, walked on the water, and came toward Jesus.³⁰ But when he saw the strong wind he became afraid. And starting to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"³² When they went up into the boat, the wind ceased.³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."³⁴ After they had crossed over, they came to land at Genesaret.³⁵ When the people there recognized him, they sent word into all the surrounding area, and they brought all their sick to him.³⁶ They begged him if they could only touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

BREAKING HUMAN TRADITIONS

15 Then Pharisees and experts in the law came from Jerusalem to Jesus and said,² "Why do your disciples disobey the tradition of the elders? For they don't wash their hands when they eat."³ He answered them, "And why do you disobey the commandment of God because of your tradition?⁴ For God said, '*Honor your father and mother*' and '*Whoever insults his father or mother must be put to death.*'⁵ But you say, 'If someone tells his father or mother, "Whatever help you would have received from me is given to God,"⁶ he does not need to honor his father.' You have nullified the word of God on account of your tradition.⁷ Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied correctly about you when he said,

⁸ *"This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me,
⁹ and they worship me in vain,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."*

TRUE DEFILEMENT

¹⁰Then he called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand.¹¹ What defiles a person is not what goes into the mouth; it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles a person."¹² Then the disciples came to him and said, "Do you know that when the Pharisees heard this saying they were offended?"¹³ And he replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted.¹⁴ Leave them! They are blind guides. If someone who is blind leads another who is blind, both will fall into a pit."¹⁵ But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us."¹⁶ Jesus said, "Even after all this, are you still so foolish?¹⁷ Don't

15:21–28 The woman in this story gained comfort in her misery by thinking great thoughts of Christ. She thought of Jesus as having such an abundance on his table that a crumb would meet her needs. Remember, she was seeking to have a demon cast out of her daughter. This would be a great miracle for her, but because she had such high esteem for Christ she saw it as nothing but a crumb for him to give. The path she took is the royal road to comfort, for focusing your thoughts on your sin alone will drive you to despair, but having great thoughts of Christ will guide you into the haven of peace.

CHARLES SPURGEON
(1834–1892)
MORNING AND EVENING

you understand that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach and then passes out into the sewer? ¹⁸But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these things defile a person. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil ideas, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰These are the things that defile a person; it is not eating with unwashed hands that defiles a person.”

A CANAANITE WOMAN'S FAITH

²¹After going out from there, Jesus went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. ²²A Canaanite woman from that area came and cried out, “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is horribly demon-possessed!” ²³But he did not answer her a word. Then his disciples came and begged him, “Send her away because she keeps on crying out after us.” ²⁴So he answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” ²⁵But she came and bowed down before him and said, “Lord, help me!” ²⁶“It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs,” he said. ²⁷“Yes, Lord,” she replied, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” ²⁸Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, your faith is great! Let what you want be done for you.” And her daughter was healed from that hour.

HEALING MANY OTHERS

²⁹When he left there, Jesus went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up a mountain, where he sat down. ³⁰Then large crowds came to him bringing with them the lame, blind, crippled, mute, and many others. They laid them at his feet, and he healed them. ³¹As a result, the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing, and they praised the God of Israel.

THE FEEDING OF THE 4,000

³²Then Jesus called his disciples and said, “I have compassion on the crowd because they have already been here with me three days and they have nothing to eat. I don’t want to send them away hungry since they may faint on the way.” ³³The disciples said to him, “Where can we get enough bread in this desolate place to satisfy so great a crowd?” ³⁴Jesus said to them, “How many loaves do you have?” They replied, “Seven—and a few small fish.” ³⁵After instructing the crowd to sit down on the ground, ³⁶he took the seven loaves and the fish, and after giving thanks, he broke them and began giving them to the disciples, who then gave them to the crowds. ³⁷They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. ³⁸Not counting children and women, there were 4,000 men who ate. ³⁹After sending away the crowd, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

THE DEMAND FOR A SIGN

16 Now when the Pharisees and Sadducees came to test Jesus, they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. ²He said, “When evening comes you say, ‘It will be fair weather because the sky is red,’ ³and in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today because the sky is red and darkening.’ You know how to judge correctly the appearance of the sky, but you cannot evaluate the signs of the times. ⁴A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” Then he left them and went away.

THE YEAST OF THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES

⁵When the disciples went to the other side, they forgot to take bread. ⁶“Watch out,” Jesus said to them, “beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” ⁷So they began to discuss this among themselves, saying, “It is because we brought no bread.” ⁸When Jesus learned of this, he said, “You who have such little faith! Why are you arguing among yourselves about having no bread? ⁹Do you still not understand? Don’t you remember the five loaves for the 5,000, and how many baskets you took up? ¹⁰Or the seven loaves for the 4,000 and how many baskets you took up? ¹¹How could you not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread? But beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!” ¹²Then they understood that he had not told them to be on guard against the yeast in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

PETER’S CONFESSION

¹³When Jesus came to the area of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴They answered, “Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, “You are blessed, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven! ¹⁸And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven.” ²⁰Then he instructed his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

16:13–28 Jesus made it clear that he, the Son of Man, is Christ the Son of the living God. He was acknowledged by Peter as Christ, and then he rebuked Peter who imagined that he was the Christ as the generality of people supposed and was averse to the idea of his suffering: “Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will find it.” For these things Christ spoke openly, he being himself the Savior of those who should be delivered over to death for their confession of him and lose their lives.

IRENÆUS (C. 130–C. 202)
AGAINST HERESIES

FIRST PREDICTION OF JESUS’ DEATH AND RESURRECTION

²¹From that time on Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and experts in the law, and be killed and on the third day be raised. ²²So Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him: “God forbid, Lord! This must not happen to you!” ²³But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me because you are not setting your mind on God’s interests, but on man’s.” ²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will find it. ²⁶For what does it benefit a person if he gains the whole world but forfeits his life? Or what can a person give in exchange for his life? ²⁷For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then *he will reward each person according to what he has done.* ²⁸I tell you the truth, there are some standing here who will not experience death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

THE TRANSFIGURATION

17 Six days later Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and led them privately up a high mountain. ²And he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. ³Then Moses and Elijah also appeared before them, talking with him.

17:1–13 I have no doubt whatever that Christ came forward of his own accord to offer to the Father the sacrifice of obedience. The disciples were not made aware of this till Christ rose, but the instruction that they now received was intended to be useful at a future period, both to themselves and to us, that no one might take offense at the weakness of Christ as if it were by force and necessity that he had suffered. We are thus taught that he was subjected to death because he wished it to be so; that he was crucified because he offered himself. We are also taught that as long as Christ remained in the world, bearing the form of a servant, nothing had been taken from him for it was of his own accord that he emptied himself.

JOHN CALVIN (1509–1564)
COMPLETE COMMENTARY
ON THE BIBLE

⁴So Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you want, I will make three shelters—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” ⁵While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my one dear Son, in whom I take great delight. Listen to him!” ⁶When the disciples heard this, they were overwhelmed with fear and threw themselves down with their faces to the ground. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Do not be afraid.” ⁸When they looked up, all they saw was Jesus alone.

⁹As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, “Do not tell anyone about the vision until the Son of Man is raised from the dead.” ¹⁰The disciples asked him, “Why then do the experts in the law say that Elijah must come first?” ¹¹He answered, “Elijah does indeed come first and will restore all things. ¹²And I tell you that Elijah has already come. Yet they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wanted. In the same way, the Son of Man will suffer at their hands.” ¹³Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.

THE DISCIPLES' FAILURE TO HEAL

¹⁴When they came to the crowd, a man came to him, knelt before him, ¹⁵and said, “Lord, have mercy on my son because he has seizures and suffers terribly, for he often falls into the fire and into the water. ¹⁶I brought him to your disciples, but they were not able to heal him.” ¹⁷Jesus answered, “You unbelieving and perverse generation! How much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I endure you? Bring him here to me.” ¹⁸Then Jesus rebuked the demon and it came out of him, and the boy was healed from that moment. ¹⁹Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why couldn’t we cast it out?” ²⁰He told them, “It was because of your little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; nothing will be impossible for you.” §

SECOND PREDICTION OF JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION

²²When they gathered together in Galilee, Jesus told them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. ²³They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised.” And they became greatly distressed.

THE TEMPLE TAX

²⁴After they arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and said, “Your teacher pays the double drachma tax, doesn’t he?” ²⁵He said, “Yes.” When Peter came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do earthly kings collect tolls or taxes—from their sons or from foreigners?” ²⁶After he said, “From foreigners,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. ²⁷But so that we don’t offend them, go to the lake and throw out a hook. Take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth, you will find a four-drachma coin. Take that and give it to them for me and you.”

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GREATEST

18 At that time the disciples came to Jesus saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” ²He called a child, had him stand among them, ³and said, “I tell you the truth,

unless you turn around and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven! ⁴Whoever then humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵And whoever welcomes a child like this in my name welcomes me.

⁶“But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a huge millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the open sea. ⁷Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! It is necessary that stumbling blocks come, but woe to the person through whom they come. ⁸If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. ⁹And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into fiery hell.

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

¹⁰“See that you do not disdain one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. ¹¹What do you think? If someone owns a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go look for the one that went astray? ¹²And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will rejoice more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. ¹³In the same way, your Father in heaven is not willing that one of these little ones be lost.

RESTORING CHRISTIAN RELATIONSHIPS

¹⁴“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault when the two of you are alone. If he listens to you, you have regained your brother. ¹⁵But if he does not listen, take one or two others with you, so that **at the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter may be established.** ¹⁶If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. If he refuses to listen to the church, treat him like a Gentile or a tax collector.

¹⁷“I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven. ¹⁸Again, I tell you the truth, if two of you on earth agree about whatever you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. ¹⁹For where two or three are assembled in my name, I am there among them.”

²⁰Then Peter came to him and said, “Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother who sins against me? As many as seven times?” ²¹Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, I tell you, but seventy-seven times!”

THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SLAVE

²²“For this reason, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves. ²³As he began settling his accounts, a man who owed 10,000 talents was brought to him. ²⁴Because he was not able to repay it, the lord ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, children, and whatever he possessed, and repayment to be made. ²⁵Then the slave threw himself to the ground before him, saying, ‘Be patient with me, and I will repay you everything.’ ²⁶The lord had compassion on that slave and released him, and forgave him the debt. ²⁷After he went out, that same slave found one of his fellow slaves who owed him 100 silver coins. So he grabbed him by the throat

18:1–5 Just as a child does not persist in anger, does not long remember injury suffered, does not think one thing and say another, so you too, unless you have similar innocence and purity of mind, will not be able to enter the kingdom of heaven. Or it might be taken in another way: “Whoever then humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven,” Jesus said, which implies, *Anyone who imitates me and humiliates himself following my example, so that he abases himself as much as I abased myself in accepting the form of a Servant, will enter the kingdom of heaven.*

JEROME (c. 342–420)
COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW

and started to choke him, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe me!’²⁹ Then his fellow slave threw himself down and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will repay you.’³⁰ But he refused. Instead, he went out and threw him in prison until he repaid the debt.³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were very upset and went and told their lord everything that had taken place.³² Then his lord called the first slave and said to him, ‘Evil slave! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me!’³³ Should you not have shown mercy to your fellow slave, just as I showed it to you?’³⁴ And in anger his lord turned him over to the prison guards to torture him until he repaid all he owed.³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if each of you does not forgive your brother from your heart.”

QUESTIONS ABOUT DIVORCE

19 Now when Jesus finished these sayings, he left Galilee and went to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan River.² Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

³Then some Pharisees came to him in order to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful to divorce a wife for any cause?”⁴ He answered, “Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator *made them male and female*,⁵ and said, ‘*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh*’?⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”⁷ They said to him, “Why then did Moses command us to *give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her*?”⁸ Jesus said to them, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of your hard hearts, but from the beginning it was not this way.⁹ Now I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another commits adultery.”¹⁰ The disciples said to him, “If this is the case of a husband with a wife, it is better not to marry!”¹¹ He said to them, “Not everyone can accept this statement, except those to whom it has been given.¹² For there are some eunuchs who were that way from birth, and some who were made eunuchs by others, and some who became eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who is able to accept this should accept it.”

JESUS AND LITTLE CHILDREN

¹³Then little children were brought to him for him to lay his hands on them and pray. But the disciples scolded those who brought them.¹⁴ But Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”¹⁵ And he placed his hands on them and went on his way.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN

¹⁶Now someone came up to him and said, “Teacher, what good thing must I do to gain eternal life?”¹⁷ He said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”¹⁸ “Which ones?” he asked. Jesus replied, “*Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, ¹⁹honor your father and mother, and love your neighbor as yourself.*”²⁰ The young man said to him, “I have wholeheartedly obeyed all these laws. What do I still lack?”²¹ Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come,

19:16–30 We should consider how much eternal life is to be loved when this miserable life that must at some time be ended is so loved. Consider how much that life is to be loved when it is a life you never end. You love this life, where you work so much, run, are busy, pant. In this busy life the obligations can scarcely be counted: sowing, plowing, working new land, sailing, grinding, cooking, weaving. And after all this hard work your life comes to an end. Look at what you suffer in this wretched life that you so love. And do you think that you will always live and never die? Learn therefore to seek eternal life, where you will not endure these things but will reign with God forever.

follow me.”²² But when the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he was very rich.

²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “I tell you the truth, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven!

²⁴ Again I say, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter into the kingdom of God.”

²⁵ The disciples were greatly astonished when they heard this and said, “Then who can be saved?”²⁶ Jesus looked at them and replied, “This is impossible for mere humans, but for God all things are possible.”²⁷ Then Peter said to him, “Look, we have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?”

²⁸ Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth: In the age when all things are renewed, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel.”²⁹ And whoever has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life.³⁰ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

20 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard.

² And after agreeing with the workers for the standard wage, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When it was about nine o’clock in the morning, he went out again and saw others standing around in the marketplace without work. ⁴ He said to them, ‘You go into the vineyard too, and I will give you whatever is right.’

⁵ So they went. When he went out again about noon and three o’clock that afternoon, he did the same thing. ⁶ And about five o’clock that afternoon he went out and found others standing around, and said to them, ‘Why are you standing here all day without work?’

⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You go and work in the vineyard too.’

⁸ When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages starting with the last hired until the first.’

⁹ When those hired about five o’clock came, each received a full day’s pay. ¹⁰ And when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more. But each one also received the standard wage.

¹¹ When they received it, they began to complain against the landowner, ¹² saying, ‘These last fellows worked one hour, and you have made them equal to us who bore the hardship and burning heat of the day.’

¹³ And the landowner replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am not treating you unfairly. Didn’t you agree with me to work for the standard wage?’

¹⁴ Take what is yours and go. I want to give to this last man the same as I gave to you. ¹⁵ Am I not permitted to do what I want with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’

¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first last.”

I am generous?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first last.”

THIRD PREDICTION OF JESUS’ DEATH AND RESURRECTION

¹⁷ As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve aside privately and said to them on the way, ¹⁸ “Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the experts in the law. They will condemn him to death, ¹⁹ and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged severely and crucified. Yet on the third day, he will be raised.”

20:20–28 The servant who serves for love is highest in the hierarchy of heaven. We may well take the lesson to ourselves. If we are ever to be near the right and the left of the Master in his kingdom, there is only one way, and that is to make self abdicate its authority as the center of our lives and to enthrone there Christ, and for his sake all our brethren. Be ambitious to be first, but remember, *noblesse oblige*. He who is first must become last. He who is Servant of all is Master of all. That is the only mastery that is worth anything, the devotion of hearts that circle round the source from which they draw light and warmth.

ALEXANDER MACLAREN
(1826–1910)
*EXPOSITIONS OF THE HOLY
SCRIPTURES*

21:1–11 The path of humility seems to lead him who walks in it a diverse way from the path of honor; one seems to tend downward and the other upward. Yet indeed they both meet and become the same, both carry a man to the same place: The donkey was a token both of kingly honor and great humility. The donkey, the symbol of humility, carried a king on his back, and on a donkey does the King of glory ascend into the city and temple of the great King, as by humiliation Christ ascended into heaven. The donkey on which Christ rode was a colt on which never man sat. So Christ's humiliation was now such as there never had been a parallel of, nor anything like it, and it carried him into glory as unparalleled.

JONATHAN EDWARDS
(1703–1758)
*SELECTIONS FROM THE UNPUBLISHED
WRITINGS*

A REQUEST FOR JAMES AND JOHN

²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling down she asked him for a favor. ²¹He said to her, "What do you want?" She replied, "Permit these two sons of mine to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." ²²Jesus answered, "You don't know what you are asking! Are you able to drink the cup I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able." ²³He told them, "You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right and at my left is not mine to give. Rather, it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

²⁴Now when the other 10 heard this, they were angry with the two brothers. ²⁵But Jesus called them and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions use their authority over them. ²⁶It must not be this way among you! Instead whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave—²⁸just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

TWO BLIND MEN HEALED

²⁹As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed them. ³⁰Two blind men were sitting by the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!" ³¹The crowd scolded them to get them to be quiet. But they shouted even more loudly, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" ³²Jesus stopped, called them, and said, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³³They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." ³⁴Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

21 Now when they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²telling them, "Go to the village ahead of you. Right away you will find a donkey tied there, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, you are to say, 'The Lord needs them,' and he will send them at once." ⁴This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet:

⁵ *"Tell the people of Zion,
'Look, your king is coming to you,
unassuming and seated on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"*

⁶So the disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road. Others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and those following kept shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! *Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!*" ¹⁰As he entered Jerusalem the whole city was thrown into an uproar, saying, "Who is this?" ¹¹And the crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee."

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

¹²Then Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all those who were selling and buying in the temple courts and turned over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those

selling doves. ¹³And he said to them, “It is written, ‘**My house will be called a house of prayer,**’ but you are turning it into a **den of robbers!**”

¹⁴The blind and lame came to him in the temple courts, and he healed them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the experts in the law saw the wonderful things he did and heard the children crying out in the temple courts, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they became indignant ¹⁶and said to him, “Do you hear what they are saying?” Jesus said to them, “Yes. Have you never read, ‘**Out of the mouths of children and nursing infants you have prepared praise for yourself?**’” ¹⁷And leaving them, he went out of the city to Bethany and spent the night there.

THE WITHERED FIG TREE

¹⁸Now early in the morning, as he returned to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹After noticing a fig tree by the road he went to it, but found nothing on it except leaves. He said to it, “Never again will there be fruit from you!” And the fig tree withered at once. ²⁰When the disciples saw it they were amazed, saying, “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?” ²¹Jesus answered them, “I tell you the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen. ²²And whatever you ask in prayer, if you believe, you will receive.”

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS

²³Now after Jesus entered the temple courts, the chief priests and elders of the people came up to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” ²⁴Jesus answered them, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Where did John’s baptism come from? From heaven or from people?” They discussed this among themselves, saying, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Then why did you not believe him?’ ²⁶But if we say, ‘From people,’ we fear the crowd, for they all consider John to be a prophet.” ²⁷So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.” Then he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

²⁸“What do you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹The boy answered, ‘I will not.’ But later he had a change of heart and went. ³⁰The father went to the other son and said the same thing. This boy answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but did not go. ³¹Which of the two did his father’s will?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, tax collectors and prostitutes will go ahead of you into the kingdom of God! ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him. But the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe. Although you saw this, you did not later change your minds and believe him.

THE PARABLE OF THE TENANTS

³³“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a fence around it, dug a pit for its winepress, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenant farmers and went on a journey. ³⁴When the harvest time was near, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his portion of the crop. ³⁵But the tenants seized his slaves, beat one, killed

another, and stoned another.³⁶ Again he sent other slaves, more than the first, and they treated them the same way.³⁷ Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and get his inheritance!’³⁹ So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him.⁴⁰ Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?’⁴¹ They said to him, ‘He will utterly destroy those evil men! Then he will lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his portion at the harvest.’

⁴²Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the scriptures: **“The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes?”**

⁴³‘For this reason I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.⁴⁴ The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces, and the one on whom it falls will be crushed.’⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them.⁴⁶ They wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowds because the crowds regarded him as a prophet.

THE PARABLE OF THE WEDDING BANQUET

22 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying:²⁴ ‘The kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son.³ He sent his slaves to summon those who had been invited to the banquet, but they would not come.⁴ Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited, ‘Look! The feast I have prepared for you is ready. My oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’⁵ But they were indifferent and went away, one to his farm, another to his business.⁶ The rest seized his slaves, insolently mistreated them, and killed them.⁷ The king was furious! He sent his soldiers, and they put those murderers to death and set their city on fire.⁸ Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but the ones who had been invited were not worthy.’⁹ So go into the main streets and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’¹⁰ And those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all they found, both bad and good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.¹¹ But when the king came in to see the wedding guests, he saw a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes.¹² And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ But he had nothing to say.¹³ Then the king said to his attendants, ‘Tie him up hand and foot and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!’¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.’

PAYING TAXES TO CAESAR

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went out and planned together to entrap him with his own words.¹⁶ They sent to him their disciples along with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that you are truthful and teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You do not court anyone’s favor because you show no partiality.’¹⁷ Tell us then, what do you think? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?’

22:1–14 Those who were first bid to the great wedding feast were the Jews. They would not come. Now the gospel is preached to all sorts of people in all nations—yet the same sinful rejection of the invitation is constantly being repeated. God, in his infinite mercy, is sending his gospel to the poorest and the vilest of humankind. Many of them do come and thus the Lord provokes you to jealousy by a people who were not a people. The king’s servants “gathered all they found, both bad and good.” The best gathering into the visible church is sure to be a mixture—there will be some coming into it who should not be there.

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¹⁸But Jesus realized their evil intentions and said, “Hypocrites! Why are you testing me?” ¹⁹Show me the coin used for the tax.” So they brought him a denarius. ²⁰Jesus said to them, “Whose image is this, and whose inscription?” ²¹They replied, “Caesar’s.” He said to them, “Then give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” ²²Now when they heard this they were stunned, and they left him and went away.

MARRIAGE AND THE RESURRECTION

²³The same day Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to him and asked him, ²⁴“Teacher, Moses said, *‘If a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and father children for his brother.’* ²⁵Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children he left his wife to his brother. ²⁶The second did the same, and the third, down to the seventh. ²⁷Last of all, the woman died. ²⁸In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had married her.” ²⁹Jesus answered them, “You are deceived because you don’t know the scriptures or the power of God. ³⁰For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ³¹Now as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, ³²*‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’*? He is not the God of the dead but of the living!” ³³When the crowds heard this, they were amazed at his teaching.

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

³⁴Now when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they assembled together. ³⁵And one of them, an expert in religious law, asked him a question to test him: ³⁶“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷Jesus said to him, “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*” ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹The second is like it: *‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’* ⁴⁰All the law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.”

THE MESSIAH: DAVID'S SON AND LORD

⁴¹While the Pharisees were assembled, Jesus asked them a question: ⁴²“What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” They said, “The son of David.” ⁴³He said to them, “How then does David by the Spirit call him ‘Lord,’ saying,

⁴⁴ “*The Lord said to my lord,
‘Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet’*”?

⁴⁵If David then calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” ⁴⁶No one was able to answer him a word, and from that day on no one dared to question him any longer.

SEVEN WOES

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²“The experts in the law and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat. ³Therefore pay attention to what they tell you and do it. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they teach. ⁴They tie up heavy loads, hard to carry, and put them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing even to lift a finger to move them. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by people, for they make their phylacteries wide and their tassels long. ⁶They love the place of honor at banquets and the

23:1–36 The scribes and Pharisees were enemies to the gospel of Christ and therefore to the salvation of people’s souls. Gain being their godliness, by a thousand devices they made religion give way to their worldly interests. They were very strict and precise in smaller matters of the law but careless and loose in weightier matters. While they would seem to be godly, they were neither sober nor righteous. We sometimes think if we had lived when Christ was upon earth that we should not have despised and rejected him, as people then did; yet Christ in his Spirit, in his Word, in his ministers is still no better treated. And it is just with God to give those up to their hearts’ lusts who obstinately persist in gratifying them.

best seats in the synagogues⁷ and elaborate greetings in the marketplaces and to have people call them ‘Rabbi.’⁸ But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher and you are all brothers.⁹ And call no one your ‘father’ on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.¹⁰ Nor are you to be called ‘teacher,’ for you have one Teacher, the Christ.¹¹ The greatest among you will be your servant.¹² And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

¹³“But woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You keep locking people out of the kingdom of heaven! For you neither enter nor permit those trying to enter to go in.

¹⁴“Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You cross land and sea to make one convert, and when you get one, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves!

¹⁵“Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple is bound by nothing. But whoever swears by the gold of the temple is bound by the oath.’¹⁷ Blind fools! Which is greater, the gold or the temple that makes the gold sacred?¹⁸ And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing. But if anyone swears by the gift on it he is bound by the oath.’¹⁹ You are blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred?²⁰ So whoever swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it.²¹ And whoever swears by the temple swears by it and the one who dwells in it.²² And whoever swears by heaven swears by the throne of God and the one who sits on it.

²³“Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You give a tenth of mint, dill, and cumin, yet you neglect what is more important in the law—justice, mercy, and faithfulness! You should have done these things without neglecting the others.²⁴ Blind guides! You strain out a gnat yet swallow a camel!

²⁵“Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside may become clean too!

²⁷“Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs that look beautiful on the outside but inside are full of the bones of the dead and of everything unclean.²⁸ In the same way, on the outside you look righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

²⁹“Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous.³⁰ And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have participated with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’³¹ By saying this you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets.³² Fill up then the measure of your ancestors!³³ You snakes, you offspring of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?

³⁴“For this reason I am sending you prophets and wise men and experts in the law, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town,³⁵ so that on you will come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.³⁶ I tell you the truth, this generation will be held responsible for all these things!

JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL

³⁷“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would have none of it! ³⁸Look, your house is left to you desolate! ³⁹For I tell you, you will not see me from now until you say, *‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!’*”

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

24 Now as Jesus was going out of the temple courts and walking away, his disciples came to show him the temple buildings. ²And he said to them, “Do you see all these things? I tell you the truth, not one stone will be left on another. All will be torn down!”

SIGNS OF THE END OF THE AGE

³As he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, his disciples came to him privately and said, “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” ⁴Jesus answered them, “Watch out that no one misleads you. ⁵For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will mislead many. ⁶You will hear of wars and rumors of wars. Make sure that you are not alarmed, for this must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷For nation will rise up in arms against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these things are the beginning of birth pains.

PERSECUTION OF DISCIPLES

⁹“Then they will hand you over to be persecuted and will kill you. You will be hated by all the nations because of my name. ¹⁰Then many will be led into sin, and they will betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will appear and deceive many, ¹²and because lawlessness will increase so much, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the person who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole inhabited earth as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

¹⁵“So when you see *the abomination of desolation*—spoken about by Daniel the prophet—standing in the holy place” (let the reader understand), ¹⁶“then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. ¹⁷The one on the roof must not come down to take anything out of his house, ¹⁸and the one in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. ¹⁹Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing their babies in those days! ²⁰Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath. ²¹For then there will be great suffering unlike anything that has happened from the beginning of the world until now, or ever will happen. ²²And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. ²³Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There he is!’ do not believe him. ²⁴For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵Remember, I have told you ahead of time. ²⁶So then, if someone says to you, ‘Look, he is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, or ‘Look, he is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe him. ²⁷For just like the lightning comes from the

24:1–28 Our Savior’s words might be applied to almost any period of the world’s history. Earth has seldom had a long spell of quiet—there have almost always been both the realities of war and the rumors of war. “Make sure that you are not alarmed” is a timely message—“for this must happen.” Therefore let us not be surprised or alarmed. The destruction of Jerusalem was the beginning of the end—but “the end is still to come.” This prophecy ought both to warn the disciples of Christ what they may expect and wean them from the world where all these and greater sorrows are to be experienced!

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east and flashes to the west, so the coming of the Son of Man will be.²⁸ Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE SON OF MAN

²⁹“Immediately after the suffering of those days, *the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.* ³⁰Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see *the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven* with power and great glory.³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

³²“Learn this parable from the fig tree: Whenever its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near.³³ So also you, when you see all these things, know that he is near, right at the door.³⁴ I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

BE READY!

³⁶“But as for that day and hour no one knows it—not even the angels in heaven—except the Father alone.³⁷ For just like the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be.³⁸ For in those days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark.³⁹ And they knew nothing until the flood came and took them all away. It will be the same at the coming of the Son of Man.⁴⁰ Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one left.⁴¹ There will be two women grinding grain with a mill; one will be taken and one left.

⁴²“Therefore stay alert because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.⁴³ But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have been alert and would not have let his house be broken into.⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

THE FAITHFUL AND WISE SLAVE

⁴⁵“Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom the master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their food at the proper time?⁴⁶ Blessed is that slave whom the master finds at work when he comes.⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, the master will put him in charge of all his possessions.⁴⁸ But if that evil slave should say to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’⁴⁹ and he begins to beat his fellow slaves and to eat and drink with drunkards,⁵⁰ then the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not foresee,⁵¹ and will cut him in two, and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

THE PARABLE OF THE 10 VIRGINS

25 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like 10 virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.² Five of the virgins were foolish, and five were wise.³ When the foolish ones took their lamps, they did not take extra olive oil with them.⁴ But the wise ones took flasks of olive oil with

their lamps. ⁵When the bridegroom was delayed a long time, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is here! Come out to meet him.' ⁷Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.' ⁹'No,' they replied. 'There won't be enough for you and for us. Go instead to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰But while they had gone to buy it, the bridegroom arrived, and those who were ready went inside with him to the wedding banquet. Then the door was shut. ¹¹Later, the other virgins came too, saying, 'Lord, lord! Let us in!' ¹²But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I do not know you!' ¹³Therefore stay alert because you do not know the day or the hour.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

¹⁴'For it is like a man going on a journey, who summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶The one who had received five talents went off right away and put his money to work and gained five more. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had two gained two more. ¹⁸But the one who had received one talent went out and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money in it. ¹⁹After a long time, the master of those slaves came and settled his accounts with them. ²⁰The one who had received the five talents came and brought five more, saying, 'Sir, you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' ²¹His master answered, 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You have been faithful in a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²²The one with the two talents also came and said, 'Sir, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more.' ²³His master answered, 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.' ²⁴Then the one who had received the one talent came and said, 'Sir, I knew that you were a hard man, harvesting where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed, ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' ²⁶But his master answered, 'Evil and lazy slave! So you knew that I harvest where I didn't sow and gather where I didn't scatter? ²⁷Then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received my money back with interest!' ²⁸Therefore take the talent from him and give it to the one who has 10. ²⁹For the one who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough. But the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ³⁰And throw that worthless slave into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

THE JUDGMENT

³¹'When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³²All the nations will be assembled before him, and he will separate people one from another like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something

25:31–45 This sign of the cross will be in the heavens when the Lord comes to judge. Then all the servants of the cross, who during life made themselves one with the Crucified, will draw near with great trust to Christ, the Judge. Why then do you fear to take up the cross when through it you can win a kingdom? In the cross is salvation, in the cross is life, in the cross is protection from enemies, in the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness, in the cross is strength of mind, in the cross is joy of spirit, in the cross is highest virtue, in the cross is perfect holiness. There is no salvation of soul nor hope of everlasting life but in the cross.

THOMAS À KEMPIS
(c. 1380–1471)
THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or naked and clothe you?’³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, ‘I tell you the truth, just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did it for me.’

⁴¹“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels!’⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink.⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not receive me as a guest, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’⁴⁴ Then they too will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not give you whatever you needed?’⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, ‘I tell you the truth, just as you did not do it for one of the least of these, you did not do it for me.’⁴⁶ And these will depart into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

THE PLOT AGAINST JESUS

26 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he told his disciples,² “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”³ Then the chief priests and the elders of the people met together in the palace of the high priest, who was named Caiaphas.⁴ They planned to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him.⁵ But they said, “Not during the feast, so that there won’t be a riot among the people.”

JESUS’ ANOINTING

⁶ Now while Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,⁷ a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of expensive perfumed oil, and she poured it on his head as he was at the table.⁸ When the disciples saw this, they became indignant and said, “Why this waste? ⁹It could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor!”¹⁰ When Jesus learned of this, he said to them, “Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a good service for me. ¹¹For you will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me! ¹²When she poured this oil on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. ¹³I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.”

THE PLAN TO BETRAY JESUS

¹⁴ Then one of the twelve, the one named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests¹⁵ and said, “What will you give me to betray him into your hands?” So they set out 30 silver coins for him.¹⁶ From that time on, Judas began looking for an opportunity to betray him.

THE PASSOVER

¹⁷ Now on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?”¹⁸ He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says, “My time

is near. I will observe the Passover with my disciples at your house.”¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had instructed them, and they prepared the Passover.²⁰ When it was evening, he took his place at the table with the twelve.²¹ And while they were eating he said, “I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.”²² They became greatly distressed and each one began to say to him, “Surely not I, Lord?”²³ He answered, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me.”²⁴ The Son of Man will go as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for him if he had never been born.”²⁵ Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” Jesus replied, “You have said it yourself.”

THE LORD'S SUPPER

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks he broke it, gave it to his disciples, and said, “Take, eat, this is my body.”²⁷ And after taking the cup and giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you,²⁸ for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.²⁹ I tell you, from now on I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”³⁰ After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

THE PREDICTION OF PETER'S DENIAL

³¹ Then Jesus said to them, “This night you will all fall away because of me, for it is written:

*“I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.”*

³² But after I am raised, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”³³ Peter said to him, “If they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away!”³⁴ Jesus said to him, “I tell you the truth, on this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”³⁵ Peter said to him, “Even if I must die with you, I will never deny you.” And all the disciples said the same thing.

GETHSEMANE

³⁶ Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to the disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”³⁷ He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and he became anguished and distressed.³⁸ Then he said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, even to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake with me.”³⁹ Going a little farther, he threw himself down with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if possible, let this cup pass from me! Yet not what I will, but what you will.”⁴⁰ Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, “So, couldn’t you stay awake with me for one hour?⁴¹ Stay awake and pray that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”⁴² He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will must be done.”⁴³ He came again and found them sleeping; they could not keep their eyes open.⁴⁴ So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same thing once more.⁴⁵ Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is approaching, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.⁴⁶ Get up, let us go. Look! My betrayer is approaching!”

26:36–46 We learn a great deal from the instructive characteristics of our Savior’s prayer during this time of severe trial. The first thing to note is that it was lonely prayer, for he withdrew from even his three most favored disciples. Christ’s prayer also was humble prayer. If this is the Master’s position, what should be yours as his humble servant? His prayer also was filial prayer, prayer befitting a child of the Father. By pleading your adoption as his child, you will find a fortress of protection through your times of trial. So do not be afraid to say, “My Father” (26:39), “Hear my cry for help. Pay attention to my prayer” (Ps 61:1).

CHARLES SPURGEON
(1834–1892)
MORNING AND EVENING

BETRAYAL AND ARREST

⁴⁷While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. ⁴⁸(Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I kiss is the man. Arrest him!”) ⁴⁹Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi,” and kissed him. ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and took hold of Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹But one of those with Jesus grabbed his sword, drew it out, and struck the high priest’s slave, cutting off his ear. ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back in its place! For all who take hold of the sword will die by the sword. ⁵³Or do you think that I cannot call on my Father and that he would send me more than 12 legions of angels right now? ⁵⁴How then would the scriptures that say it must happen this way be fulfilled?” ⁵⁵At that moment Jesus said to the crowd, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me like you would an outlaw? Day after day I sat teaching in the temple courts, yet you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶But this has happened so that the scriptures of the prophets would be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled.

CONDEMNED BY THE SANHEDRIN

⁵⁷Now the ones who had arrested Jesus led him to Caiaphas, the high priest, in whose house the experts in the law and the elders had gathered. ⁵⁸But Peter was following him from a distance, all the way to the high priest’s courtyard. After going in, he sat with the guards to see the outcome. ⁵⁹The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were trying to find false testimony against Jesus so that they could put him to death. ⁶⁰But they did not find anything, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward ⁶¹and declared, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’” ⁶²So the high priest stood up and said to him, “Have you no answer? What is this that they are testifying against you?” ⁶³But Jesus was silent. The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” ⁶⁴Jesus said to him, “You have said it yourself. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man *sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.*” ⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his clothes and declared, “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? Now you have heard the blasphemy! ⁶⁶What is your verdict?” They answered, “He is guilty and deserves death.” ⁶⁷Then they spat in his face and struck him with their fists. And some slapped him, ⁶⁸saying, “Prophecy for us, you Christ! Who hit you?”

PETER'S DENIALS

⁶⁹Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A slave girl came to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” ⁷⁰But he denied it in front of them all: “I don’t know what you’re talking about!” ⁷¹When he went out to the gateway, another slave girl saw him and said to the people there, “This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.” ⁷²He denied it again with an oath, “I do not know the man!” ⁷³After a little while, those standing there came up to Peter and said, “You really are one of them too—even your accent gives you away!” ⁷⁴At that he began to curse, and he swore with an oath, “I do not know the man!” At that moment a rooster crowed. ⁷⁵Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.

JESUS BROUGHT BEFORE PILATE

27 When it was early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people plotted against Jesus to execute him. ²They tied him up, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

JUDAS' SUICIDE

³Now when Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus had been condemned, he regretted what he had done and returned the 30 silver coins to the chief priests and the elders, ⁴saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood!" But they said, "What is that to us? You take care of it yourself!" ⁵So Judas threw the silver coins into the temple and left. Then he went out and hanged himself. ⁶The chief priests took the silver and said, "It is not lawful to put this into the temple treasury, since it is blood money." ⁷After consulting together they bought the Potter's Field with it, as a burial place for foreigners. ⁸For this reason that field has been called the "Field of Blood" to this day. ⁹Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "*They took the 30 silver coins, the price of the one whose price had been set by the people of Israel, ¹⁰and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me.*"

JESUS AND PILATE

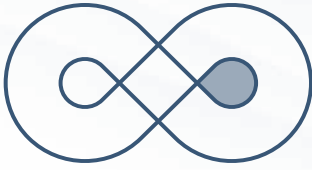
¹¹Then Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so."

¹²But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he did not respond. ¹³Then Pilate said to him, "Don't you hear how many charges they are bringing against you?" ¹⁴But he did not answer even one accusation, so that the governor was quite amazed.

¹⁵During the feast the governor was accustomed to release one prisoner to the crowd, whomever they wanted. ¹⁶At that time they had in custody a notorious prisoner named Jesus Barabbas. ¹⁷So after they had assembled, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Christ?" ¹⁸(For he knew that they had handed him over because of envy.) ¹⁹As he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent a message to him: "Have nothing to do with that innocent man; I have suffered greatly as a result of a dream about him today." ²⁰But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. ²¹The governor asked them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas!" ²²Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?" They all said, "Crucify him!" ²³He asked, "Why? What wrong has he done?" But they shouted more insistently, "Crucify him!"

JESUS IS CONDEMNED AND MOCKED

²⁴When Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but that instead a riot was starting, he took some water, washed his hands before the crowd and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood. You take care of it yourselves!" ²⁵In reply all the people said, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!" ²⁶Then he released Barabbas for them. But after he had Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified. ²⁷Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the governor's residence and gathered the whole cohort around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe around him,



THE WESTMINSTER CATECHISM (1646–1648)

THE LARGER AND Shorter Westminster Catechisms offer questions and answers covering a wide array of important doctrinal topics. The Catechisms particularly focus on declaring what Scripture teaches regarding the doctrines of salvation and the Christian life, along with sections on the Ten Commandments, the sacraments, and the Lord's Prayer. The shorter Catechism is intended for the individual while the Larger Catechism is intended for the church as a community. This selection of teachings is from the Larger Catechism.

QUESTION 1: WHAT IS THE CHIEF AND HIGHEST END OF MAN?

ANSWER: MAN'S chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever.

QUESTION 5: WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES PRINCIPALLY TEACH?

ANSWER: THE Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

QUESTION 24: WHAT IS SIN?

ANSWER: SIN is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.

QUESTION 91: WHAT IS THE DUTY WHICH GOD REQUIRETH OF MAN?

ANSWER: THE duty which God requireth of man is obedience to his revealed will.

QUESTION 49: HOW DID CHRIST HUMBLE HIMSELF IN HIS DEATH?

ANSWER: CHRIST humbled himself in his death in that having been betrayed by Judas, forsaken by his disciples, scorned and rejected by the world, condemned by Pilate, and tormented by his persecutors; having also conflicted with the terrors of death and the powers of darkness, felt and borne the weight of God's wrath, he laid down his life an offering for sin, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.

QUESTION 59: WHO ARE MADE PARTAKERS OF REDEMPTION THROUGH CHRIST?

ANSWER: REDEMPTION is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it; who are in time by the Holy Ghost enabled to believe in Christ according to the gospel.

QUESTION 70: WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

ANSWER: JUSTIFICATION is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he pardoneth all their sins, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in his sight; not for anything wrought in them or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them and received by faith alone.

QUESTION 73: HOW DOOTH FAITH JUSTIFY A SINNER IN THE SIGHT OF GOD?

ANSWER: FAITH justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it, nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification; but only as it is an instrument by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his righteousness.

²⁹and after braiding a crown of thorns, they put it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand, and kneeling down before him, they mocked him: “Hail, king of the Jews!” ³⁰They spat on him and took the staff and struck him repeatedly on the head. ³¹When they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes back on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

THE CRUCIFIXION

³²As they were going out, they found a man from Cyrene named Simon, whom they forced to carry his cross. ³³They came to a place called Golgotha (which means “Place of the Skull”) ³⁴and offered Jesus wine mixed with gall to drink. But after tasting it, he would not drink it. ³⁵When they had crucified him, *they divided his clothes by throwing dice.* ³⁶Then they sat down and kept guard over him there. ³⁷Above his head they put the charge against him, which read: “This is Jesus, the king of the Jews.” ³⁸Then two outlaws were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹Those who passed by defamed him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰and saying, “You who can destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are God’s Son, come down from the cross!” ⁴¹In the same way even the chief priests—together with the experts in the law and elders—were mocking him: ⁴²“He saved others, but he cannot save himself! He is the king of Israel! If he comes down now from the cross, we will believe in him!” ⁴³*He trusts in God—let God, if he wants to, deliver him now* because he said, “I am God’s Son!” ⁴⁴The robbers who were crucified with him also spoke abusively to him.

JESUS’ DEATH

⁴⁵Now from noon until three, darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶At about three o’clock Jesus shouted with a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” that is, “**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**” ⁴⁷When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “This man is calling for Elijah.” ⁴⁸Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹But the rest said, “Leave him alone! Let’s see if Elijah will come to save him.” ⁵⁰Then Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and gave up his spirit. ⁵¹Just then the temple curtain was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks were split apart. ⁵²And tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had died were raised. ⁵³(They came out of the tombs after his resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.) ⁵⁴Now when the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and what took place, they were extremely terrified and said, “Truly this one was God’s Son!” ⁵⁵Many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and given him support were also there, watching from a distance. ⁵⁶Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

JESUS’ BURIAL

⁵⁷Now when it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered that it be given to him. ⁵⁹Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut in the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the

27:45–55 No mean miracle was accomplished in the tearing of so strong and thick a veil. The old law of ordinances was put away. That rent also revealed all the hidden things of the old dispensation: The mercy seat could now be seen, and the glory of God gleamed forth above it. By the death of our Lord Jesus we have a clear revelation of God, for he was “not like Moses who used to put a veil over his face” (2 Cor 3:13). Life and immortality are now brought to light, and things that have been hidden since the foundation of the world are manifest in him. Hence access to God is now permitted and is the privilege of every believer in Christ Jesus.

CHARLES SPURGEON
(1834–1892)
METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE
SERMONS

entrance of the tomb and went away.⁶¹ (Now Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there, opposite the tomb.)

THE GUARD AT THE TOMB

⁶²The next day (which is after the day of preparation) the chief priests and the Pharisees assembled before Pilate ⁶³and said, “Sir, we remember that while that deceiver was still alive he said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’⁶⁴ So give orders to secure the tomb until the third day. Otherwise his disciples may come and steal his body and say to the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead,’ and the last deception will be worse than the first.”⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, “Take a guard of soldiers. Go and make it as secure as you can.”⁶⁶ So they went with the soldiers of the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

THE RESURRECTION

28 Now after the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.² Suddenly there was a severe earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descending from heaven came and rolled away the stone and sat on it.³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.⁴ The guards were shaken and became like dead men because they were so afraid of him.⁵ But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified.⁶ He is not here, for he has been raised, just as he said. Come and see the place where he was lying.⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead. He is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there.’ Listen, I have told you!”⁸ So they left the tomb quickly, with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.⁹ But Jesus met them, saying, “Greetings!” They came to him, held on to his feet and worshiped him.¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee. They will see me there.”

THE GUARDS' REPORT

¹¹ While they were going, some of the guards went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened.¹² After they had assembled with the elders and formed a plan, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers,¹³ telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came at night and stole his body while we were asleep.’¹⁴ If this matter is heard before the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.”¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story is told among the Jews to this day.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

¹⁶ So the 11 disciples went to Galilee to the mountain Jesus had designated.¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted.¹⁸ Then Jesus came up and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

28:1–10 The angels remind the women that Christ had earlier told them about these events, but they did not believe or understand him. Such a message is certain proof that although the angels are totally pure and holy spirits and we are only poor sinners, nevertheless they do not shun or despise us but rather want to be good friends with us. And the angels come with two commands: The first is that the women should not be frightened by their appearance; the other command is that they should quickly go forth and announce the resurrection to the disciples. We should be very glad in both these parts, for the angel says first, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised.”

MARTIN LUTHER (1483–1546)
*THE FRUIT OF CHRIST'S
RESURRECTION*