

Proof *of* Love
The Price God Paid

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c o n t e n t s

	Introduction	5
<i>Chapter One</i>	Love Interrupted	7
<i>Chapter Two</i>	Love Extended	15
<i>Chapter Three</i>	Love Conquers All	21
<i>Chapter Four</i>	Love Accepted	29
<i>Chapter Five</i>	Falling in Love	37
	Glossary	45
	The Gospel of John	49

i n t r o d u c t i o n

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:16-17, NKJV).

The Lord laid it on my heart to write *Proof of Love* for you as a clear-cut explanation of what it means to accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. I want you to fully understand the tremendous price God paid for you. It’s important for you to know how special you are to Him and to realize just how much He loves you — no matter what your past may be.

It’s not an accident that you’re reading this book. God has a plan and purpose for your life, and it all starts with Jesus. Jesus said, *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11:28, NIV). No matter what your need may be, there’s freedom in Jesus Christ.

As you continue to read *Proof of Love*, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Himself and God’s love to you. My prayer for you is that you’ll know the Truth and the Truth will set you free.

God Bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Cerullo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ben" and last name "Cerullo" clearly distinguishable.


Ben Cerullo

“This is real love. It is not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins”

1 John 4:10, NLT

chapter one

Love Interrupted



God is love. What an incredible thought! It's a truth that can cast out all fear, heal a broken heart, change a troubled life, shatter any addiction, and redeem a lost soul. Thankfully, it's available to all of us, no matter what we've done.

Although God's love is amazing and complete, many people misunderstand His unconditional love. We wonder why a God so full of love would allow terrible things to happen in this world. Why would He let thousands of people die from sickness and disease? Why would a loving God permit war and natural disasters to claim so many lives?

In order to answer these questions, it's important that we first understand all the facts. We must truly comprehend who God is, what He stands for, and what our relationship with Him was created to be like.

Despite theories that there are many gods, the Bible clearly teaches that there's only one God. His name is Jehovah. It's not Buddha, not Muhammad, not Krishna, not Allah. God is not the stars, moon, or any elements of the earth. The world would like you to think that there are many paths to God, but the fact is there's only one path to God. And it's been provided by the one true God — the God of the Bible.

It may be hard to grasp, but the truth is that God had no beginning — and He'll never come to an end. No one created the great Creator; unlike everything else, He's always existed. The Bible says, *“The LORD your God...is from everlasting to everlasting”* (Nehemiah 9:5, NIV). Another Scripture declares, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega — the beginning and the end, says the Lord God. ‘I am the One who is, who always was, and who is still to come, the Almighty One’”* (Revelation 1:8, NLT).

The Bible tells us that, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”* (Genesis 1:1, NKJV). The earth didn't spontaneously combust from a big bang. God created it for a purpose. Genesis teaches that God also created everything in the earth — the land, water, plants, and animals. Then, after the heavens and earth were formed, *“And the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being”* (Genesis 2:7, NKJV).

It wasn't long before the Lord decided that man needed an earthly companion and helper.

“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man” (Genesis 2:21-22, NKJV).

So, as we see, God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. They didn't evolve from apes, but God — the Master of the Universe — shaped them. They (and we) are God's handiwork, created in His image

with a divine plan and purpose in mind. We were created, as the Bible says, to rule, subdue, and have dominion over this world.

God clearly states His intentions for us in Genesis 1:26-28,

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth’” (NKJV).

Above all, you and I were created by God to know Him and to have a relationship with Him. That’s always been His plan — to have fellowship with us. God created man and woman so that He could shower His love on us, and so that we could love Him in return. The Bible says, *“How great is the love the Father has lavished upon us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”* (1 John 3:1). And, *“God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in Him”* (1 John 4:16, NIV).

It’s an incredible plan — to walk through life enjoying a personal, intimate relationship with the Almighty God. Imagine days without shame or fear...and nights without doubt or loneliness. It’s a plan of absolute assurance; one that positions you as a child of God, with the authority to take dominion over your circumstances. It’s a plan that gives you the confidence of knowing that God always has your back. Nothing could be better.

So why did the plan change? What could interrupt this perfect kind of love? How did the world end up in the state it’s in today? Let’s go a little deeper.

Most people would say that sin originated in the Garden of Eden. But sin began before the world was ever created. At one time, there was a magnificent creature named Lucifer. He was an angel of the highest order whose name meant “morning star.” He was beautiful and powerful — so powerful, in fact, that he was permitted to know firsthand the fullness of the glory of God.

But the Bible tells us in Isaiah 14 that Lucifer wanted to make himself “*like the Most High*.” In the first act of sin, Lucifer (now called Satan or the devil) said, “*I will exalt my throne above the stars of God*” (Isaiah 14:13, NKJV).

He rebelled against God, taking one-third of the angels with him. It was his sin of pride that led to his ultimate fall. Simply put, pride is believing that your plan is better than God’s plan. It’s a dangerous act that sets up an adversarial relationship with God.

Needless to say, Lucifer’s revolt went nowhere, and he was kicked out of heaven forever. But that’s not the end of his story. Lucifer, the most powerful of created beings, will one day be banished to the lake of fire (hell).

In the meantime he wants to do as much damage to God’s original plan as possible. The Bible specifically says, “*...Be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour*”(1 Peter 5:8, NASB). The Bible also teaches that the devil’s plan is always to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).

After being thrown out of heaven, Lucifer expanded his adversarial scheme. This time he didn’t target God directly. He’d already lost that battle. So Satan, instead, went after God’s most beloved creation...man.

He did this because he wanted what mankind had been given. Man and woman were created to extend God’s heavenly kingdom on earth. They were given dominion and power to rule over the earth. Satan was after a kingdom. If he could deceive man and woman into falling into sin, he would ultimately gain the authority they possessed.

Let me set the stage for you. When God created man it was never

His intention for man to ever know sin, sickness, or death. Adam and Eve lived in a world without pain, sorrow, suffering, hate, war, violence, or sickness. Their Garden of Eden didn't even have thorns or weeds, and the plants produced fruit easily. Above all, they enjoyed a perfect relationship with God — living in His unconditional love and acceptance. He walked with them and talked with them, and took pleasure in their sweet fellowship (Genesis 1:27-31).

But Satan began to tempt Adam and Eve, and he eventually redirected their thoughts away from God. Lucifer came to Eve as a serpent, tempting her to question God's goodness. He planted seeds of doubt that ultimately led to devastating disobedience.

In Genesis 2, the Bible describes two trees growing in the middle of the garden — the “*tree of life*” and the “*tree of the knowledge of good and evil*.” God told Adam and Eve they could eat from any tree in the garden except the “*tree of the knowledge of good and evil*” (Genesis 2:17, NKJV).

Satan approached Eve and asked, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’” Eve answered, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

Then the serpent responded, “*You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil*” (Genesis 3:1-5, NKJV).

The problem came when Adam and Eve allowed themselves to be blinded by Satan's lies. He was very deceptive, just like he is today. The Bible says,

“He (Satan) was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44, NKJV).

Satan accomplished several things through his deception:

He got Adam and Eve to take their eyes off all the gifts God had given them. They began, instead, to focus on the one thing He said they couldn't have. As a result, Satan got Adam and Eve to doubt God's goodness, wisdom, and love.

He convinced them that they could meet their own needs better than God. Therefore, they should be in control — not God.

And, Satan's ultimate lie was this: there's something you can do to become like God — to be in control — to be your own god. Adam and Eve bought into the lie. They made a choice with their wills to rebel and do things their own way. By doing so, they lost their authority to rule, subdue, and have dominion over the earth.

Eve was first to eat of the forbidden fruit. Then she persuaded Adam to do the same. As a result of their rebellion, sin entered the world, and with it came "the fall" in which every individual life would follow. Sin severed the sacred relationship, and Adam and Eve (and we) were immediately separated from God.

This was never God's intention or desire for His beloved creation, but God created Adam and Eve with a free will. It was the only way they could freely love their Creator. Allowing freedom of choice was a risk on God's part — but if He hadn't taken it, Adam and Eve (and you and I) would be nothing more than mindless puppets.

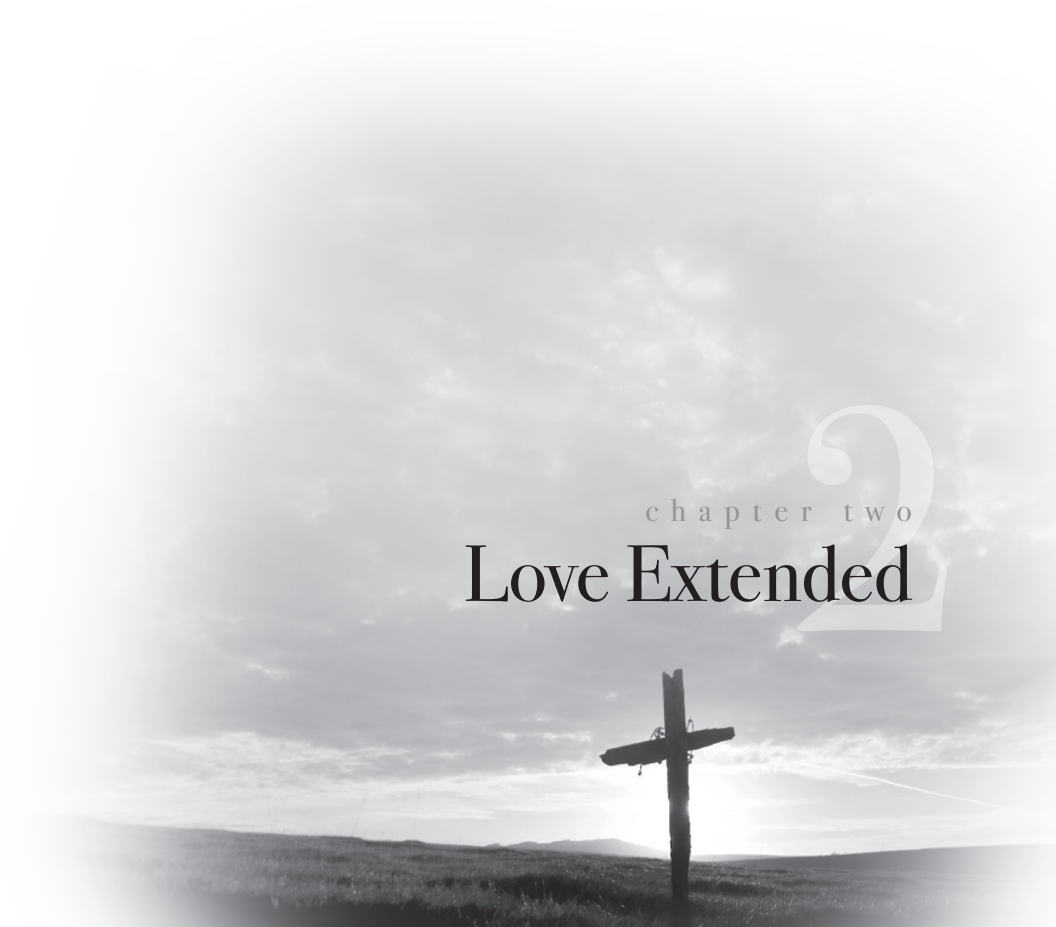
When Adam used his free will to disobey God, he contracted a curse called sin. His children inherited the same curse, and it's been passed down from generation to generation. Whether we live in America, Europe, Africa, or Asia, we're all sinners. We've broken God's moral law. We've sinned against Him. The Bible says, "*For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:22-23, NKJV).

Why is sin such a big deal? The Bible says that God is a holy and righteous Being. He's perfect in every way. If we could ever get a vision of God's majestic righteousness, what a radical difference it would make in our lives.

The Scripture tells us that “*God is light and in Him is no darkness at all*” (1 John 1:5, NKJV). It’s impossible to grasp the love of God unless we have a clear understanding of the holiness of God.

God’s holiness demands that all sin be punished. There were consequences to sin for Adam and Eve, and there are consequences to sin for you and me. When sin was introduced into the world, so were its consequences — sickness, evil, and death. Not only did physical death come into the world, but a spiritual death entered man’s realm. Man also forfeited his authority and dominion over this world to Satan. No doubt, Adam and Eve left us in a desperate situation.

But remember, God is love and it’s His nature to love. Because He loves us so much, He didn’t allow Adam’s and Eve’s disobedience to stop His plan for the human race! He could have destroyed us. But through His great love, God provided a way to connect with Him again. He sent us a gift. And it would prove to be the most selfless, wonderful, revolutionary gift ever given to all of mankind.



chapter two

Love Extended

Did you know that you're God's investment? God has made an investment in your life, even without the security that He'll get a return on it. This chapter will reveal the depth of God's love for you and the expanse of His plan for redemption.

Because Adam and Eve decided to disobey God, all of us are condemned to spiritual and eternal separation from God. But despite what we deserve, God designed a miraculous plan to redeem us. God sent a gift unlike any other. He sent His Son to earth. God first extended His love toward us in a garden: Eden. He then reached out again in another garden, Gethsemane, to show how much He was willing to pay to get us back. He provided proof that He wouldn't leave us or forsake us. Jesus Christ, the new Adam, came to undo the damage of sin. The Bible says,

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23, NKJV).

What kind of God is this who wouldn't turn His back on rebellious, wicked people? What kind of God would send His only Son to die so we could live with Him forever?

He's an all-knowing, all-powerful God; everything He does comes from His inexhaustible love. *“Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the skies... O LORD, you preserve both man and beast. How priceless is Your unfailing love!”* (Psalm 36:5-7, NIV). The One who created the universe created you. The One who knows everything about galaxies, angels, and natural wonders of the world knows everything about you. The One who upholds all things upholds you.

So how would He get this redemptive gift into our hands and into our hearts? It came packaged in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Jesus came as a baby — born to a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit. He lived a sinless life and then died a brutal death nailed to a cross. While Jesus hung on the cross, all of your sin, all of your sickness, and the chains of your death caused by sin were upon Him. Almighty God, in His holiness, had to turn His back on His own Son because Jesus was covered with our sins.

Sin separates us from God. God is holy, and there is no sin in Him. We assume that the awesome love of God overshadows the other characteristics of God — especially His holiness. If we were to enter God's presence covered in our sin, we would be destroyed because of the holiness of God. Jesus took your sin — your spiritual death. Some may wonder why it had to happen this way — why God didn't stop it — why Jesus didn't call ten thousand angels to come to the rescue and get Him off that cross. The answer is that Jesus knew His purpose. The only way to bring victory to the world and to redeem us was to face the cross, no matter how hard and painful it would be. It was the ultimate act of selflessness — and absolute proof of His unconditional love.

I don't know why God established the shedding of blood as the way to forgiveness, but He did. He's a righteous judge, full of wisdom and

truth, and He says, “...*Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness*” (Hebrews 9:22, NIV). To satisfy God’s demand for justice, blood had to be shed to pay the penalty for our sin.

In the Old Testament, an animal like a perfect, spotless lamb would be sacrificed. There were specific guidelines on how to make sacrifices and offerings. There were many types of sacrifices made for many reasons. Some were for the cleansing of sin; other sacrifices were for guilt. Burnt offerings signified a person’s dedication to God. And, there were even fellowship offerings.

Sacrifices and offerings were a daily event. But ultimately, it wasn’t enough. Old Testament worshipers were never cleansed once and for all; the sacrifice had to be repeated year after year.

Then God sent His Son.

Jesus clothed Himself in humanity and came to earth for the specific purpose of becoming the final, perfect sacrifice. The Bible says,

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:1-5, NKJV).

The Scripture continues, *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father; full of grace and truth”* (John 1:14, NKJV).

This passage teaches us that Jesus is the Word, that He was with God in the beginning, and that He became flesh. He came to shine His light into the darkness of this world. He came to bring truth and restoration. Jesus was the spotless Lamb of God, willing to take the blame for all our sins and pay our debt in full. Hebrews 7:26-27 refers to Jesus as our High Priest,

“Such a High Priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when He offered himself” (NIV).

His task wasn’t an easy one. He had to leave His home and His Heavenly Father in order to become flesh and blood. Then Jesus had to die one of the most painful and humiliating deaths known to man — that of being nailed to a cross.

Yet, even before His death, Jesus agonized over His mission for you and me. Beyond the physical pain was the knowledge that the sins of the world would be on His shoulders. He understood that sin separated us from God, and the thought of being forsaken by His Father was almost unbearable. The Bible tells us about His inner struggle, *“He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me...’”* Then, in one final prayer, He proved His love to be selfless, *“...nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will”* (Mark 14:35-36, NKJV).

These verses illustrate that His mission wasn’t an easy one just because He was the Son of God. Facing the cross and then choosing to die were the hardest, most selfless acts in the history of the world. The Bible says that the stress of what Jesus faced was so intense, He actually began to sweat drops of blood. It’s hard to imagine how He didn’t run and hide. But Jesus stayed. He was focused on the will of His Father to bring restoration to the human race at any cost.

Just imagine as the angry crowd pressed in on Him. They grabbed Him, bound Him, spat on Him, and cursed Him. They prodded Him like an animal — pushing Him in front of the chief priests, Pilate, and then Herod. They slapped His face and sucker punched Him with their fists. They flogged Him with brutally deep lashes. Coldly, they smashed a crown of twisted thorns onto His head. They struck His head with a stick again

and again, ripping His scalp wide open and pressing the thorns deeper into His skull. Finally, they pushed a rough and heavy cross onto His back, ripping into His open wounds. Then, after all this, He walked the long hill to Golgotha — the place where His death, and our victory, was waiting.

Remember that Jesus was a man without sin. He never cheated anyone, never stole from anyone, never lied to anyone. He didn't act out of jealousy or spite. There was no hatred or pride in Him. This makes His sacrifice even more awesome! He was the only man to ever walk the earth who didn't deserve death, the grave, and hell.

The Apostle Paul wrote, *“Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:7-8, NIV).

As Jesus hung on the cross, bearing our penalty and shame, darkness fell over the face of the earth. In that moment of separation from His Father, He cried out in anguish, *“My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”* (Matthew 27:46, NKJV).

And then it was done. Jesus' final words from the cross were, *“It is finished”* (John 19:30, NKJV). It was a shout of triumph as Satan's efforts were destroyed forever.

In a miracle of powerful love, Christ died for the sins of everyone who accepts the gift of God's forgiveness. When He extended His arms to be nailed to that cross, He extended His immeasurable love to cover us. He covered all our mistakes, all our wrongdoings, all our failures and sins — past, present, and future. Your sins and mine are covered, once and for all, through His precious blood that was shed that day on Calvary.

It's a concept that contradicts everything we know or can understand. In a world where dishonest cover-ups are normal and good impressions are a priority at any cost, He invites us to expose our true selves — raw and weak. And then, as we repent, He covers our guilt with His goodness and our shame with His holiness.

The purpose of the cross was to take our sin and pain and make us holy and blameless so God could adopt us, heal us, restore us, and use

us. His scars are the evidence that our debt is forgiven and our sins are washed away.

That's what's known as amazing grace! Grace is God's undeserved favor and blessing. God's grace sustains us every moment of the day, and without it, we couldn't exist. We deserve to die for our sins, but in His grace, at a heartbreaking cost, God sent Jesus to die in our place. The Bible says, "*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men*" (Titus 2:11, NKJV). Don't ever take His grace for granted!

I've often wondered why God offers such glorious grace to us. Truthfully, the Bible points to only one thing — that God is rich in mercy because of His great love. It's His very nature. How, then, can a holy God give grace to sinners when sin is such an offense to Him? Logic tells us that God can only love us in our saved, sinless state; but that's not what His actions show us.

The bottom line is this: God has chosen to give us grace, and He is sovereign. Even when we are contaminated and infected with sin, He still sees something in us to love. And the truth rings clear that there's nothing you can do to make God love you more, and there's nothing you can do to make Him love you any less. How amazing!

chapter three

Love Conquers All



It's important to know and understand what Jesus Christ's perfect love accomplished in your life. Jesus did more than just cover your sins and provide a bridge to your relationship with God. In this chapter you'll see exactly what God's love conquered...through the life, blood, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

God sent His Son, Jesus, to earth for a very specific purpose. One thing we have to understand about God is that nothing happens by accident. God is a God of plan, purpose, design, and objectivity — full of wisdom and power. God knows no limits and no boundaries. So when He sent His Son, there was a purpose, plan, and reason for Jesus to enter the world in a unique way — through a virgin named Mary. Then, He lived a sinless life, died on a cross, and rose from the dead on the third day. It was all part of God's strategic plan.

The Bible says, *“For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil”* (1 John 3:8, NKJV). The purpose of Jesus’ coming was not just to interrupt, hinder, or hold back the work of the devil. It was to destroy the work of the devil. And that’s just what He did. His task was clear — to overcome, destroy, and demolish the power of sin, sickness, and death — to restore us to our rightful place in the kingdom of God — and to redeem us from the curse of the sin. The dictionary describes the word *redeem* — to buy back, repurchase, to get or win back, to free from what distresses or harms, to free from captivity by payment of a ransom, to release from blame or debt. When you get the complete revelation of what Jesus did for you, you’ll never be the same again.

In order to fully grasp everything that God’s love achieved for His children, let’s take it step-by-step.

First — God’s love conquered sin through the blood of Christ.

The Bible provides many Scriptures on the subject:

“Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!” (Romans 5:9-10, NIV).

“...You...have redeemed us to God by Your blood...” (Revelation 5:9, NKJV).

“...and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood...” (Revelation 1:5, NKJV).

“...and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7, NKJV).

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace...” (Ephesians 1:7, NKJV).

These verses clearly illustrate that the blood of Jesus covers sin. In Colossians 2:13-15 we read,

“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed the principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it” (NLT).

Second — Jesus not only destroyed the power of sin, He also destroyed all the side effects that sin can bring into your life. No sin is more powerful than the blood of Christ. Jesus came to set you free. You can be free from every form of bondage, weakness, depression, and fear. You can be free from any and every demonic power that would try to destroy your life.

God sent His love to set the captives free. The Bible says, *“Therefore He says: ‘When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive...’*” (Ephesians 4:8, NKJV). So if you feel held captive, know that Jesus has bought your freedom with His blood. He has, like Isaiah 53:4 says, *“...borne our griefs and carried our sorrows”* (NKJV). All your grief and sorrows are side effects of sin entering the world. But they can be removed through Jesus.

Third — God sent Jesus to destroy the power of sickness. Sickness was introduced into the world when sin entered. It's actually another side effect of sin. How do we know this? There was no sickness in the Garden of Eden, and there's no sickness in heaven. In Psalm 107:20, we see that Jesus was sent to bring us healing "*He (God) sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions*" (NKJV). The Word represents Jesus (see John 1:14).

The prophet Isaiah gave a vivid and accurate description about Jesus over 600 years before He came. Isaiah 53 presents a powerful outline for what Jesus would accomplish and how He would die. The fifth verse says, "*He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed*" (NKJV). Psalm 103:2-3 says, "*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits; who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases...*" (NKJV). So the Bible shows us that the power that sickness once held has been overcome by the blood of the lamb.

Fourth — Jesus Christ destroyed the power of death through His resurrection. The Bible says, "*...that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage*" (Hebrews 2:14-15, NKJV). Jesus had to become flesh and blood in order to triumph over death. He had to die as a human to show that death and the grave could not hold Him.

On the third day following his death and burial, Jesus broke the chains of death and rose from the dead. Why is this significant? The resurrection is a public testimony of Christ's release from His mission; it's also evidence of the Heavenly Father's acceptance of the Son's work of redemption. It's absolute victory over death and the grave...case closed! Revelation 1:18 says, "*I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of death*" (NKJV).

This glorious resurrection is proof that payment has been made for our sins, that Jesus' death was a perfectly acceptable offering to satisfy divine justice, and that His blood is a ransom for all sinners.

The Apostle Paul best describes the importance of Christ's resurrection:

“And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men” (1 Corinthians 15:17-19, NIV).

Paul continues with positive assurance, *“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive”* (1 Corinthians 15:20-22, NIV).

There's no doubt that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event in all of history. It sets Christianity apart from all other religions. There's no other resurrected Savior who is alive and is interceding on behalf of His people (see Hebrews 7:25).

Fifth — In addition to destroying the power of the devil and overcoming sin, sickness, and death, Jesus also restored our authority and dominion (see Genesis 1:26-28). Remember that one of the consequences of sin was Adam losing his authority to Satan.

When God gave Adam authority over the earth, it was in Adam's hands. It belonged to him. The Bible says, *“The heavens, even the heavens, are the LORD's; But the earth He has given to the children of men”* (Psalm 115:16, NKJV).

From Lucifer's fall to Adam's and Eve's sin, God never lost His power or authority. When Satan fell into sin and was thrown out of heaven, he never lost his power either. The battle between God and the

devil — good and evil — was never a battle over power. It was a battle over authority. God never intended for Satan to have authority over this earth or over man. God stripped Satan of all his authority before he was thrown out of heaven. Since the devil couldn't take God's authority, he went after man. The transfer of authority came when Adam chose to submit his will to Satan instead of God. This act forfeited our God-given authority, handing Satan control over the earth that was created and designed for us. Jesus said, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*" (Matthew 28:18, NIV). So, the Son of God came to re-establish our authority. He never lost His, but we did. Jesus re-established our rightful place as sons and daughters of God.

When Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days and nights, preparing for His ministry, Satan was there too — testing and tempting Him. One day, Satan took Jesus to the top of a mountain. The Bible says,

"Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, 'All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours'" (Luke 4:5-7, NKJV).

This passage shows us several things:

- 1) The devil had authority over the kingdoms of the world.
- 2) Those kingdoms had been given to him by the sons of man (Adam).
- 3) Jesus stayed focused on His mission to restore that authority back to us. He didn't buy into the lie of the devil.

Jesus was on a mission — to work out the strategic plan His Father sent Him to accomplish. Jesus knew that victory would come on the cross and at the appointed time. He knew the blood that flowed through His body would conquer the power of sin, sickness, and death once and

for all. Jesus answered the devil, saying, “*Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve’*” (Luke 4:8, NKJV).

Paul, in Ephesians, shows us the awesomeness of God and explains that Jesus is Lord above all:

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Ephesians 1:17-23, NKJV).

It truly is finished. Jesus has conquered all and restored us to our rightful place. He’s provided us with the keys to the kingdom of heaven and given us victory over every circumstance. Matthew 16:19 says, “*And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven*” (NKJV). Authority has been restored to man through Jesus Christ.

The sixth and last step is this: Jesus restored to us the Holy Spirit.

In John 16:7 He tells us why it was so important that He return to heaven, “*Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away;*

for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you” (NKJV).

Jesus also said, *“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high”* (Luke 24:49, NKJV). What was this promise that Jesus spoke of? He gives the answer in Acts 1:5, *“For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit...”* (NKJV) Jesus didn’t leave us alone when He returned to heaven. All believers everywhere have available the same promise of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a person — with a purpose and role. Jesus said, *“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you”* (John 16:13-14, NKJV). The Holy Spirit will lead you, guide you, and teach you. He will also empower you.

The Bible says, in Acts 1:8, that two things will happen when believers receive the Holy Spirit:

- 1) He will give you power.
- 2) You will be His witnesses.

The only way we’re able to follow Christ and be a witness for Him is through the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives, demonstrating and revealing God’s power in us. The Holy Spirit never lived within people until Jesus returned to His Father in heaven. Providing the Holy Spirit was one of the most important things Jesus did for His children.

So, as we uncover God’s strategic plan, we see how important it was for Jesus to come to earth in the form of a man. In order to accomplish His mission, He had to live a sinless life, shed His blood, die on a cross, be laid in a tomb, and, on the third day, rise from the dead. Today, He sits at God’s right hand in heaven. God has established His Son as the Supreme Head over everything.

Hebrews 1:1-3 says,

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of Majesty on high...”
(NKJV)

It’s hard to imagine having to send your only Son to die such a horrific death for such a sinful and wicked people. But it proves, without question, how much God was willing to pay to restore mankind to Himself. The price has been paid, and Love has conquered all!



chapter four

Love Accepted

Are you beginning to see the substantial proof of God's incredible love for you? The birth of Jesus Christ into this sinful world, His willing sacrifice on the cross, and His miraculous resurrection all point to an undeniable love. The Bible says that you were bought with a price. But just because that price has been paid, it doesn't automatically apply to all of us. You have a choice to make.

Remember, when God created you, He gave you free will. Although the Lord loves you like no one else can, He will not command you to accept Him. You must choose Him. He will not make up your mind for you. He will not force Himself on you. If there were 100 steps between you and God, He would take 99, but He would leave that last step to you.

In the book of Kings, the prophet Elijah had a face-off on a mountain called Carmel. He called together all the children of Israel along with

450 prophets of Baal. He addressed the crowd, saying, “*...How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him*” (1 Kings 18:21, NKJV). This verse shows that the people had a choice. They could use their free will to choose whom they would serve. Elijah said, “*Let’s have a contest. I’ll make an altar and prepare a sacrifice to my God, and you do the same to yours. And the god who answers with fire is God.*” Elijah’s actions were necessary because the people of that time were worshipping two gods, and the Lord was angry. The Bible says, “*You shall have no other gods before Me*” (Exodus 20:3, NKJV).

The Lord proved Himself to be the one true God that day on Mount Carmel. When Elijah called on Him, He sent fire to consume the sacrifice. The people had a choice to either follow the living God or turn their backs on Him. The same is true for you today. Ultimately, you must choose whom you will serve...yourself or God. There’s no doubt, when you choose God and His Son, you’ll know His presence, His power, and His peace in your life.

Before we go further, I’d like to address some of the lies the enemy might tell you about accepting Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Satan will do whatever he can to keep you from becoming a Christian. He’ll try to make you think that Christians are all hypocrites. You’ll meet people who say they’re Christians, but you’ll see them living as if they’re not. Or, they’ll preach one thing and do another. It’s important not to judge God by how people act. True, Christians should live according to the Bible. They certainly should practice what they preach. But they’re human and they make mistakes — just like you and me. Don’t focus on people who can let their emotions get the best of them; focus on God who never changes. The Bible says that “*He is the same yesterday, today, and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8, NKJV) and in Malachi 3:6, “*For I am the LORD, I do not change*” (NKJV). Why is this important? It means you can trust your life into His hands. You can know that He’s not going anywhere. He’ll never turn His back on you or leave the scene when the going gets

rough. He created you, and He loves you. He doesn't lie, and He won't fail you. You can trust Him.

The devil also wants you to think that becoming a Christian means you'll have to live a boring life, filled with rules and regulations. That couldn't be further from the truth. Following Christ is exciting, rewarding, and fulfilling. It's not about rules and regulations; it's about a relationship with the One who created you.

I'm not going to lie to you; you probably won't be the most popular person on the block when people find out you're a Christian. But don't be discouraged or ashamed; stand strong in your faith. Paul said, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes...*" (Romans 1:16, NKJV).

Don't let the devil lie to you and keep you from accepting Jesus as your Savior. It doesn't matter what you've done; God can and will forgive you. The Bible says, "*For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Romans 8:38-39, NKJV). Don't let guilt, condemnation, and shame rule your life and keep you away from the Lord. If you need peace and freedom, today is your day to receive it.

Whatever your fear or concern may be, I want you to know that God has a plan for your life. You're not reading this book by accident. God has made an appointment with you so that you can hear His heart and feel His love. The Bible says, in John 15:16, "*You did not choose Me, but I chose you...*" (NKJV).

God has chosen you; He wants to have a relationship with you. He wants to heal you; He wants to set you free from everything that may be holding you down.

God has provided the free gift of His Son, Jesus. You can decide whether to receive it or reject it. Look at it this way — the gift of life that God so generously offers has been delivered to your heart's doorstep. Will

you grab it with excitement and passion, tear it open with anticipation, and appreciate its priceless value? Or, will you leave it where it sits, thinking you'll open it later, or worse yet, ignore completely the treasure inside?

Accepting God's greatest gift is simple. You admit that you need a relationship with the One who made you. You receive God's judgment that you're guilty of sin as charged. You face the truth that you're helpless to save yourself from your sins. You acknowledge that God's solution to your sinfulness is the ONLY answer: His Son, Jesus Christ. You recognize that when you invite Him to come into your life, forgive your sins, and be the Lord of your life, then God's sentence of death and the curse of sin are transferred over to Christ.

It's a beautiful thing — this gift of salvation. The word *salvation* comes from the Greek word *sozo*. To be "saved" means to be set free, to be delivered, to be protected and healed. It means to be made whole from sin, sickness, and death.

Why would anybody not want to accept such a radically transforming gift? Let's look at some Bible verses that clearly walk you through accepting Jesus as your personal Savior. Each one is from the Book of Romans. Together, they present a road map to the Gospel of Jesus Christ:

"...For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..."
(Romans 3:23, NKJV).

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23, NKJV).

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, NKJV).

"...that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness,

and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9-10, NKJV).

“For whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved” (Romans 10:13, NKJV).

If you feel something stirring in your heart right now, that’s the Holy Spirit. He wants you to allow Jesus to come into your life. I encourage you not to feel overwhelmed. Answer the knock on your heart’s door and invite Jesus to be the Lord of your life. Don’t wait to get your life right. The Bible says, *“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2, NKJV).* If you want to personally experience the proof of God’s love — His miraculous gift of salvation — you can do it right now. Just invite Jesus to come into your life and forgive you of your sins. Ask Him to cleanse you from all unrighteousness; ask Him to be Lord of your life. Then believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead...and you will be saved!

Will you pray this prayer right now?

Dear Jesus,

I know that I’m a sinner. Please forgive me for my sins and wash my heart clean. Thank You for dying on the cross for me. The Bible says that if I confess with my mouth and believe in my heart that God raised You from the dead, then I will be saved. I do believe that You are the resurrected Lord. Please come into my heart and live there. Be the Lord and Master of my life. Teach me to walk with You and live for You all the days of my life. Thank You for proving Your great love for Me. Thank You for saving me and giving me the opportunity to live eternally in heaven with You. Please fill me, right now, with Your Spirit. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

If you just prayed that prayer, congratulations! Your life will never be the same. You’re now part of God’s family. Everything I’ve shared in this book now belongs to you.

Once a person receives the redemptive plan of God’s love into their lives, then what? Let me caution you about three things. First, this gift is so lavish, so huge, so wonderful that many new believers may feel compelled to “do something” in exchange for it. Believe me, there’s nothing to be done. I remind you again about grace: It’s the kindness and favor of God extended to you. It’s nothing you can earn or deserve. Grace is God saying, “You can do nothing to save yourself; there is no need to even try because I have done it all. Come and receive My free gift.” In grace there’s no debt, no works, no bondage, no striving, and no burden.

We don’t have to beg for or manipulate circumstances for grace. We simply need to receive it with gratitude and joy; this pleases the very heart of God. The Bible says, “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast*” (Ephesians 2:8-9, NKJV).

No one will make it to heaven by just being a “good person.” There’s no thoughtful deed that can earn your priceless salvation; not even keeping the Ten Commandments can do it for you. Going to church or Sunday school doesn’t offer sinners the right to go to heaven either. Not even believing there is a God will allow you through the gates of heaven.

There’s ONE way to heaven, and it’s by God’s grace alone — through faith in Jesus Christ. “*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12, NIV).

My second warning is this — many new believers may fall into thinking that grace is a license to sin. I assure you, it’s not! Just because God has given you His grace doesn’t mean you should take advantage of His mercy. The book of Jude, verse 4, talks about godless men who’ve misused grace as twisted permission to live immoral lives, thus denying Christ. Don’t make their same mistake. We can’t go around carelessly sinning because we know God will forgive us. Galatians 5:13 reminds us, “*You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love*” (NIV).

God came to Cain in Genesis 4:7 and said, “...*Sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it*” (NKJV).

When the Spirit of God comes to live in one of His believers, a change takes place. The Apostle Paul writes, “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NKJV). This change may, or may not, be felt on the inside. But others should notice it. In a parable Jesus taught in Matthew 7:20, He compared us to fruit trees. Just as we can recognize one tree from another by its fruit, God says that we can recognize His children “by their fruits.” In other words, a Christian’s actions will set him or her apart from others.

Remember, nothing we do can earn our salvation. But, as followers of Christ, we’re now motivated to do good things because of our gratitude to God for having mercy on us. “Good fruit” is an outward expression of the “good work” that God has begun in His children.

Walking with Christ is a journey of learning to live God’s way. Jesus said, “*Then He said to them all, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me’*” (Luke 9:23, NKJV). You learn to follow Christ by daily laying down the fleshly desires of this world and walking in His grace alone.

Certainly, there will be times when you fall short and need to ask God to forgive you and renew your strength. In these situations, where you miss the mark, don’t be overwhelmed by guilt and condemnation. God knows that we’ll sin at times, “*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:8-9, NIV).

God’s divine process for dealing with sin goes like this:

- 1) We’re convicted and “tugged on” by the Holy Spirit
- 2) We confess the sin
- 3) We repent of — turn away from — the sin
- 4) We forget it...and so does He!

Paul said in the book of Philippians, *“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 3:13-14, NIV).

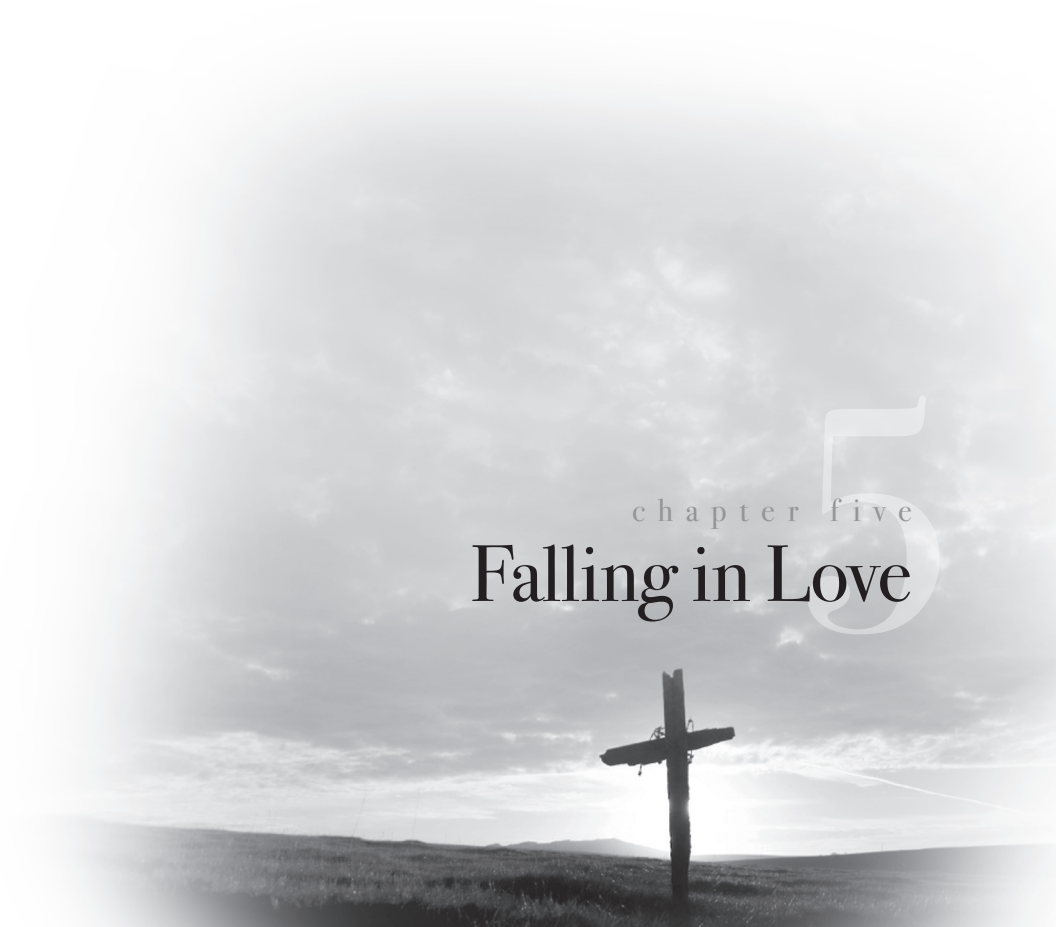
Once you’ve confessed your sins to God and asked Him to forgive you, it’s time to move on in the renewed power of the Holy Spirit. This is both a gift from God and your right as a believer. Psalm 103:12 says that God removes our sins *“as far as the east is from the west”* (NKJV). What an awesome expression of God’s love toward us!

And my third warning is this — becoming a Christian doesn’t mean that life will be magically perfect or free from trouble. Jesus said, in John 16:33, *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”* (NKJV).

Choosing to follow Christ means you are now an enemy of Satan. The devil wants to kill, steal, and destroy your life, but Christ has come so that you can have abundant life. You will go through trials and tribulation, but James 1:2-3 says, *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience”* (NKJV).

Having Christ in your life gives you strength that you’ve never experienced. You’re not alone now. God has your back. As a child of God, you belong to Him, and He becomes your Father. Certainly, you’ll face troubles and make some bad choices, but, as with any good parent, God will take care of you. He’ll lead you through life one step at a time.

As you begin to walk with the Lord and seek after Him, you’ll become aware that, in everything He does and says, He’s crying out, “I love you.” The proof is all around and ever present. And, in return, it makes it easy to fall in love with Him.



chapter five

Falling in Love

The Christian life is not lived by studying what Jesus did and trying, in your own strength, to duplicate it. It's not a script to be read and acted out. It's real life — a complete life — a meaningful life — a worthy life. It's His life lived out through you. He becomes your life. He becomes your true love.

There's no formula to having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, but there are patterns and examples in the Bible that we can follow. Don't feel overwhelmed as you learn how to approach God. Just take it one step at a time — one day at a time. Focus on your relationship with Him today. The past is the past, and you can't change the mistakes you've made. But you can press into God, and He'll press into you. Don't look to the bigness of your needs or circumstances, but keep your eyes focused on the bigness of your God to lead, guide, and direct you.

As you begin your relationship, it's imperative that you enter into God's presence through worship and prayer. Just like with earthly relationships, you must spend time together. It's the only way to know each other. The closer you draw to Jesus and learn His heart, the more beauty you'll see... and the deeper your love will grow. So if you hunger for an intimate, vital relationship with your Heavenly Father, begin to worship Him.

What is worship? It's expressed in countless ways in many different church traditions and cultures. But God-honoring, Christ-centered, Spirit-led worship always involves expressions of gratitude, awe, and devotion. When we worship with sincerity, we're expressing to God His enormous worth and value in our lives.

Like the angels in heaven, all true worshipers say, "*You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power*" (Revelation 4:11, NKJV). True worship not only recognizes the worthiness of God, it rejoices in it. Our worship should involve both our attitude and our action.

Let me caution you about one thing. Worship that feels right may not necessarily be right. God has a prescription for praise:

First — Our praise must be "through Jesus Christ." Apart from Him, we're alienated from God.

Second — We must remember that praise is a sacrifice, a giving of something that's valuable.

Third — Praise from our lips should be outward evidence of an inward, passionately burning heart for Christ.

So how do we worship? For many people, worship is considered to be the singing part of a church service. But it's SO much more. It's an entire life — home, work, church, and community — that's lived to honor God. The Bible shows specifically how God has designed us for worship. We can glorify Him by:

- *Presenting our entire selves to God* (Romans 12:1).
- *Living godly lives* (1 Corinthians 1:2).
- *Offering a sacrifice of praise with our mouths* (Hebrews 13:15).
- *Doing good things* (Hebrews 13:16).

- *Giving generously and sharing with others* (Hebrews 13:16).
- *Singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs* (Ephesians 5:19).
- *Proclaiming the Word of God* (1 Timothy 4:13).
- *Remembering the Lord's sacrifice through the celebration of communion* (1 Corinthians 11:24-26; Acts 2:46-47).

These verses point out just a few ways for us to engage in worship. Always remember that worshiping God shouldn't be reserved for the church building alone. It's something you carry in your heart throughout the week.

The Bible says, "*And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him*" (Colossians 3:17, NKJV). This means that whether you're completing schoolwork, job-related work, housework, or whatever your hands find to do — do the very best you can for the Lord's sake. When you do this, you'll be blessed. God's Word says, "*For in him we live and move and have our being*" (Acts 17:28, NKJV). So no matter what the task, do it by the Spirit and in recognition that you're a living vessel of worship to the Lord. When you strive to honor God in your work, you'll find yourself excelling in life, and you'll be rewarded. "*Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed*" (Proverbs 16:3, NIV).

Along with worship, Christians have the unique privilege of falling in love with their Lord through prayer. Prayer is simply talking and communicating with God — just like you would to a close friend.

Prayer isn't speaking some kind of incantation or reading off a prepared list. It's communion with God. In Psalm 42:7, the Bible says, "*Deep calls to deep*" (NKJV). In prayer, the depths of your spirit are in communion with the depths of the Spirit of God. Out of this, you receive instruction, guidance, and wisdom.

The Bible tells many stories of individuals who prayed for different reasons and in different ways. For example, when Daniel was at home in an upstairs room, he got down on his knees and prayed three times a

day. He gave thanks to God and asked Him for help with a specific need (Daniel 6:10-11).

In Genesis 17:3, Abraham fell on his face before God, demonstrating complete reverence and humility. And, in John 11:41, we find that Jesus lifted His eyes toward heaven and spoke out loud, expressing thanksgiving and confidence in His heavenly Father.

When Hannah went to the temple to pray, Scripture says that she was speaking in her heart. Her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard (1 Samuel 1:13-16). She was pouring out her soul to the Lord...out of great anguish and grief. God heard His daughter, Hannah, and fulfilled her heart's desire for a child.

One more example can be found with King David. He writes, "*I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble*" (Psalm 142:1-2, NIV).

As you can see, there's no right or wrong way to pray. You may stand or kneel, keep your eyes open or closed, speak audibly or silently. Prayer should not be bound by tradition. It should be a matter of the heart.

Christians should always be in an attitude of communion with God. Prayer can take place in every circumstance. In my life, as various things happen, I find myself talking to Him, asking for advice, or seeking His favor. According to Scripture, the Christian's life should be filled with prayer: "*Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus*" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NASB).

When you pray, tell the Lord how much you love Him and express your thanks for all He's done on your behalf. The Bible says, "*Enter His gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name*" (Psalm 100:4, NIV). He's truly worthy of all our praise!

If you're not sure how to praise the Lord, take a look at the Book of Psalms. You'll find many powerful and touching prayers that can be

your guide. Check out Psalm 104 — it’s a beautiful example of heartfelt praise and adoration.

In prayer, you should also ask the Lord for forgiveness. Forgiveness is key. And as we seek it from heaven, we should give it on earth. Jesus was very clear about this when He taught, “*For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins*” (Matthew 6:14-15, NIV). The relationship of God’s people to Him comes about because of continuous forgiveness. If you want to see God move in your life, you have to be willing to forgive other people, just as God is willing to forgive you. And because you forgive, it doesn’t mean you approve of what someone may have done. You don’t have to become best friends. But you do have to let go of the anger, resentment, and bitterness you may hold in your heart. I know that this can be difficult, so ask the Lord to give you strength and the ability to forgive.

Be quick to confess all your sinful thoughts, attitudes, words, and actions to God. Don’t be afraid to get specific; He already knows! Then, be assured that God stands joyfully ready to forgive.

As you boldly approach Jesus, your Advocate, you’ll experience the restoration of pure fellowship with the Father. Next, when you want guidance or direction, go to God first. If you have a need in your life — in your family, your health, or your finances — present it to God. Share with your Savior about your day. Tell Him how you feel and what you desire. God loves to hear from you, and He wants to know about the concerns of your heart. The Bible says,

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7, NIV).

And finally, be persistent with your prayers. The Bible urges us to do this:

“Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice” (Psalm 55:17, NIV).

“...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16, NKJV).

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened” (Matthew 7:7-8, NKJV).

God will not give things to a half-hearted seeker, so seek the Lord with all your heart. If you have a need, don't give up; go ahead and bang on heaven's door! Persistent prayer is an opportunity to express your ever-deepening hunger for God and to develop a confidence that, in due season, the Lord will hear your cries.

I can't leave the topic of prayer without telling you about the importance of faith. The two go hand-in-hand. Faith is *“the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* (Hebrews 11:1, NKJV).

The Bible encourages us to passionately pursue God's wisdom and intervention with a spirit of faith:

“If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind” (James 1:5-6, NIV).

So approach the throne of God with boldness and unwavering

belief — this is what pleases the Lord. Worship and prayer, along with reading the Bible, are practical ways to feed your spirit and strengthen your personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And, they're all things you can do on your own. But God intends for His children to have support and encouragement. In fact, He's designed us to live in a community of other believers. That's why the church is so important — it's where Christians can find fellowship, concern, protection, and provision.

God's Word says,

"...Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — all the more..." (Hebrews 10:24-25, NIV).

God wants us to fellowship with people who share our common love and affection for Jesus. Getting involved in church gives believers the opportunity to worship God through music and songs. Worshiping together — lifting our voices as one — provides a time of refreshment, peace, and joy as the presence of the Lord is welcomed. Jesus said, *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them"* (Matthew 18:20, NKJV).

Finding a home church also gives believers an outlet for positively using their time, talent, and treasure. God gives each of us unique gifts, and He delights when we use them for His glory. Simply put, the church is most healthy when all its members are contributing to the vitality of the body.

"Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us" (Romans 12:4-6, NIV).

When choosing a church remember to:

Pray — Ask God to lead you to the church where He wants you to worship and serve.

Seek — Look for a fellowship that believes the “whole” Bible and teaches that it’s the inspired, inerrant Word of God.

Trust — Rest in the knowledge that the Lord has a plan for your life. He’ll make it clear to you!

As a Christian, when you practice the concepts of worship, prayer, and service to others, you’re sending a message to the Lord. You’re saying, “I love You; I’m in awe of You. I desperately need You; I understand the tremendous price You paid for me!” And He’s so pleased to receive your love letter.

He says to you in return, “I’ll never leave you or forsake you; My heart is in pursuit of you. You can trust Me; the proof of My love for you is undeniable!”

This small book cannot begin to contain all there is to learn about God’s glorious love. But my hope is that you caught a glimpse of its magnitude. God’s love for you spans the width of the universe and the length of eternity; it reaches from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell.

I encourage you to dive into that love and allow it to transform you. It will be a never-ending, awesome journey into the very heart of God.

GLOSSARY *of* TERMS



A

Abba: a term of affection for God, literally meaning “Daddy.”

Advocate: a legal term, referring to one who pleads the cause of another; in the case of salvation, Jesus is our Advocate, who testifies to His Father on our behalf that we are without guilt, because of our trust in Him for salvation.

Angels: spirit beings who serve God in worship, carry special messages, and bring protection and assistance to God’s people.

Anointed: set apart or consecrate for holy or sacred use; Jesus is the “Christ,” which literally means the anointed one.

Anointing: Supernatural ability.

Atonement: to cover or to cleanse; the process of reconciling man to God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, which atones for or covers our sins.

B

Baptism: it is a sacrament that symbolizes the new Christian’s death to the old sin-life and his new birth in Christ. It also signifies public declaration or identification with Jesus as Lord.

Believer: one who finds salvation by faith alone, through grace alone, by Christ alone.

Body of Christ: the larger Christian community and all those who are a part of it.

Born Again: to experience a spiritual rebirth, where we literally pass from spiritual condemnation (because of our sin) into eternal life because we confess with our mouth and believe in our heart that Jesus is Lord. When we are born again, the Holy Spirit breathes new life into our spirit: Christ is born in us spiritually.

C

Christianity: the relationship of people to Christ, made up of doctrines and precepts taught by Christ and recorded by the writers of the Scriptures.

Church: the larger community of followers of Christ.

Covenant: a holy, irrevocable promise or contract between God and man. Jesus secures the covenant that ensures eternal salvation to those who place their trust in Him.

D **Day of Christ Jesus:** the day when Jesus will return to earth to take His followers home to Heaven with Him.

Demons: evil spirits; angels who were cast out of Heaven when they sided with Lucifer in his rebellion against God.

Disciple: someone who accepts the views of a teacher and obeys those teaching; we are “disciples” of the teachings of Jesus Christ and of the entire Bible.

F **Faith:** in general, it is the persuasion of the mind that a certain statement is true. Its primary idea is trust or belief in something for which there is no proof; in the spiritual realm, we exercise faith or an inner confirmation in a God whom we cannot see. On a practical level, faith is simply responding in obedience to what you believe is God’s will for your life.

Fellowship: to join with, or gather together with, other Believers; most commonly refers to mutual times of worship and celebration.

G **Glory:** the splendor, honor, brightness, praise, distinction, and majesty of God; His infinite perfection.

Gospel: the “good news” that Jesus is the Way of salvation to all who believe.

Grace: God’s undeserved mercy, favor, and blessing toward all who believe in Jesus as Savior.

Great Commission: the call of God on the lives of all Believers to tell people worldwide about salvation in Jesus.

H **Heir:** a person who is entitled to inherit property, possessions, or benefits from someone who wants to give something special to that person. We inherit salvation, the blessings of God, the promises of God, and ultimately, eternal life in Heaven because we are joint “Heirs” with Christ.

Holy of Holies: the innermost part of the Temple where the ark of God was placed and where His presence resided on earth. It was the place where the high priest experienced the Presence of God and brought an offering to make atonement for the sins of the people.

J **Jehova-Jira:** refers to the Lord God as our “provider.”

Jehova-Rapha: refers to the Lord God as our “healer.”

Jehova-Shalom: refers to the Lord God as our “peace.”

L **Lamb’s Book of Life:** a book in which the names of all God’s elect children are recorded; on the Day of Judgment, all those whose names are recorded in this book will gain entrance into Heaven for eternity.

Lucifer: literally, the “morning star”; Satan’s name before being cast out of Heaven by God for his rebellion.

O **Offerings:** special gifts that we present to God in addition to our tithes.

P **Parable:** stories or illustrations from everyday life that Jesus used to express a spiritual principle or moral lesson.

Prayer: conversation with God; often reflected in adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and earnest petitions for needs.

R **Repentance:** a turning away from our sin; literally a renouncement, an about-face from sin to an embracing of God’s ways; a changing of mind.

Resurrection: to be raised from the dead; most significantly, when Jesus was raised from the dead after He was crucified on the cross and buried in a tomb.

Righteous: holy; when we accept Jesus as Savior and Lord, we exchange our sin for Jesus’ righteousness; we are, in essence made in “right standing” with God when we are saved.

Sabbath: a special day of rest, given by God to man; also called the “Lord’s Day,” a time set aside for worship and rest.

Salvation: the process of being saved by Jesus’ death and our trust in His sacrifice as our only means of gaining acceptance with God, representing our great deliverance from the guilt and condemnation of sin.

Satan: the devil; God’s evil archenemy and the enemy of every Believer.

Savior: refers to Jesus as the only means by which we may be saved from sin and death.

Scripture: another term that refers to the Bible, God’s revealed will to His chosen people, through divine inspiration, with God working through man.

Second Coming: when Jesus comes back to earth a second time to judge mankind and to take His followers to Heaven forever.

Sins: acts of the will that are disobedient to the laws of God.

Spiritual Warfare: fighting against the spiritual forces of darkness by the power of the Holy Spirit and the authority of God’s Word.

Temptation: the act of enticing one to evil by any means.

Testimony: telling others what God has done for us and giving evidence of His work in our lives.

Tithe: a tenth part of wealth of any kind; in the Church, it refers to a giving of one-tenth of your income to God’s work.

Trinity: refers to the three distinct persons of the Godhead: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. One of the great mysteries of the faith is that they are one, separate, and equal all at the same time.

Word of God: another term that refers to the Bible, a collection of 66 individual books, written by prophets, priests, and apostles under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Worship: literally a combination of the words “worth” and “ship”; the act in which reverence, devotion, and adoration are expressed by followers of Christ.



the G O S P E L
of J O H N

1

IN THE beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself.

2 He was present originally with God.

3 All things were made *and* came into existence through Him; and without Him was not even one thing made that has come into being.

4 In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.

5 And the Light shines on in the darkness, for the darkness has never overpowered it [put it out or absorbed it or appropriated it, and is unreceptive to it].

6 There came a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 This man came to witness, that he might testify of the Light, that all men might believe in it [adhere to it, trust it, and rely upon it] through him.

8 He was not the Light himself, but came that he might bear witness regarding the Light.

9 There it was—the true Light [was then] coming into the world [the genuine, perfect, steadfast Light] that illumines every person.

10 He came into the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him [did not know Him].

11 He came to that which belonged to Him [to His own—His domain, creation, things, world], and they who were His own did not receive Him *and* did not welcome Him.

12 But to as many as did receive *and* welcome Him, He gave the authority (power, privilege, right) to become the children of God, that is, to those who believe in (adhere to, trust in, and rely on) His name.

13 Who owe their birth neither to bloods nor to the will of the flesh [that of physical impulse] nor to the will of man [that of a natural father], but to God. [They are born of God!]

14 And the Word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate) and tabernacled (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us; and we [actually] saw His glory (His honor, His majesty), such glory as an only begotten son receives from his father, full of grace (favor, loving-kindness) and truth.

15 John testified about Him and cried out, This was He of Whom I said, He Who comes after me has priority over me, for He was before

me. [He takes rank above me, for He existed before I did. He has advanced before me, because He is my Chief.]

16 For out of His fullness (abundance) we have all received [all had a share and we were all supplied with] one grace after another *and* spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing *and* even favor upon favor *and* gift [heaped] upon gift.

17 For while the Law was given through Moses, grace (unearned, undeserved favor and spiritual blessing) and truth came through Jesus Christ.

18 No man has ever seen God at any time; *the only unique Son, or the only begotten God, Who is in the bosom [in the intimate presence] of the Father, He has declared Him [He has revealed Him and brought Him out where He can be seen; He has interpreted Him and He has made Him known].*

19 And this is the testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites to him from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you?

20 He confessed (admitted the truth) and did not try to conceal it, but acknowledged, I am not the Christ!

21 They asked him, What then? Are you Elijah? And he said, I am not! Are you the Prophet? And he answered, No!

22 Then they said to him, Who are you? Tell us, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?

23 He said, I am the voice of one crying aloud in the wilderness [the voice of one shouting in the desert], Prepare the way of the Lord [level, straighten out, the path of the Lord], as the prophet Isaiah said.

24 The messengers had been sent from the Pharisees.

25 And they asked him, Why then are you baptizing if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?

26 John answered them, I [only] baptize in (with) water. Among you there stands One Whom you do not recognize *and* with Whom you are not acquainted *and* of Whom you know nothing.

27 It is He Who, coming after me, is preferred before me, the string of Whose sandal I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things occurred in Bethany (Bethabara) across the Jordan [at the Jordan crossing], where John was then baptizing.

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming to him and said, Look! There is the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world!

30 This is He of Whom I said, After me comes a Man Who has priority over me [Who takes rank above me] because He was before me *and* existed before I did.

31 And I did not know Him *and* did not recognize Him [myself]; but it is in order that He should be made manifest *and* be revealed to Israel [be brought out where we can see Him] that I came baptizing in (with) water.

32 John gave further evidence, saying, I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and it dwelt on Him [never to depart].

33 And I did not know Him *nor* recognize Him, but He Who sent me to baptize in (with) water said to me, Upon Him Whom you shall see the Spirit descend and remain, that One is He Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

34 And I have seen [that happen—I actually did see it] and my testimony is that this is the Son of God!

35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,

36 And he looked at Jesus as He walked along, and said, Look! There is the Lamb of God!

37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Him.

38 But Jesus turned, and as He saw them following Him, He said to them, What are you looking for? [And what is it you wish?] And they answered Him, Rabbi—which translated is Teacher—where are You staying?

39 He said to them, Come and see. So they went and saw where He was staying, and they remained with Him that day. It was then about the tenth hour (about four o'clock in the afternoon).

40 One of the two who heard what John said and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He first sought *and* found his own brother Simon and said to him, We have found (discovered) the Messiah!—which translated is the Christ (the Anointed One).

42 Andrew then led (brought) Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, You are Simon son of John. You shall be called Cephas—which translated is Peter [Stone].

43 The next day Jesus desired *and* decided to go into Galilee; and He found Philip and said to him, Join Me as My attendant *and* follow Me.

44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the same city as Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip sought *and* found Nathanael and told him, We have found (discovered) the One Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote about—Jesus from Nazareth, the [legal] son of Joseph!

46 Nathanael answered him, [Nazareth!] Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip replied, Come and see!

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him and said concerning him, See! Here is an Israelite indeed [a true descendant of Jacob], in whom there is no guile *nor* deceit *nor* falsehood *nor* duplicity!

48 Nathanael said to Jesus, How do You know me? [How is it that You know these things about me?] Jesus answered him, Before [ever] Philip called you, when you were still under the fig tree, I saw you.

49 Nathanael answered, Teacher, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!

50 Jesus replied, Because I said to you, I saw you beneath the fig tree, do you believe in *and* rely on *and* trust in Me? You shall see greater things than this!

2

51 Then He said to him, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you all, you shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man!

ON THE third day there was a wedding at Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.

2 Jesus also was invited with His disciples to the wedding.

3 And when the wine was all gone, the mother of Jesus said to Him, They have no more wine!

4 Jesus said to her, [Dear] woman, what is that to you and to Me? [What have we in common? Leave it to Me.] My time (hour to act) has not yet come.

5 His mother said to the servants, Whatever He says to you, do it.

6 Now there were six waterpots of stone standing there, as the Jewish custom of purification (ceremonial washing) demanded, holding twenty to thirty gallons apiece.

7 Jesus said to them, Fill the waterpots with water. So they filled them up to the brim.

8 Then He said to them, Draw some out now and take it to the manager of the feast [to the one presiding, the superintendent of the banquet]. So they took him some.

9 And when the manager tasted the water just now turned into wine, not knowing where it came from—though the servants who had drawn the water knew—he called the bridegroom

10 And said to him, Everyone else serves his best wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then he serves that which is not so good; but you have kept back the good wine until now!

11 This, the first of His signs (miracles, wonderworks), Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory [by it He displayed His greatness and His power openly], and His disciples believed in Him [adhered to, trusted in, and relied on Him].

12 After that He went down to Capernaum with His mother and brothers and disciples, and they stayed there only a few days.

13 Now the Passover of the Jews was approaching, so Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

14 There He found in the temple [enclosure] those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers sitting there [also at their stands].

15 And having made a lash (a whip) of cords, He drove them all out of the temple [enclosure]—both the sheep and the oxen—spilling *and* scattering the brokers' money and upsetting *and* tossing around their trays (their stands).

16 Then to those who sold the doves He said, Take these things

away (out of here)! Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise (a marketplace, a sales shop)!

17 And His disciples remembered that it is written [in the Holy Scriptures], Zeal (the fervor of love) for Your house will eat Me up. [I will be consumed with jealousy for the honor of Your house.]

18 Then the Jews retorted, What sign can You show us, seeing You do these things? [What sign, miracle, token, indication can You give us as evidence that You have authority and are commissioned to act in this way?]

19 Jesus answered them, Destroy (undo) this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.

20 Then the Jews replied, It took forty-six years to build this temple (sanctuary), and will You raise it up in three days?

21 But He had spoken of the temple which was His body.

22 When therefore He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this. And so they believed *and* trusted *and* relied on the Scripture and the word (message) Jesus had spoken.

23 But when He was in Jerusalem during the Passover Feast, many believed in His name [identified themselves with His party] after seeing His signs (wonders, miracles) which He was doing.

24 But Jesus [for His part] did not trust Himself to them, because He knew all [men];

25 And He did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man [needed no evidence from anyone about men], for He Himself knew what was in human nature. [He could read men's hearts.]

3

NOW THERE was a certain man among the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler (a leader, an authority) among the Jews,

2 Who came to Jesus at night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know *and* are certain that You have come from God [as] a Teacher; for no one can do these signs (these wonderworks, these miracles—and produce the proofs) that You do unless God is with him.

3 Jesus answered him, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that unless a person is born again (anew, from above), he cannot ever see (know, be acquainted with, and experience) the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus said to Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter his mother's womb again and be born?

5 Jesus answered, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, unless a man is born of water and [even] the Spirit, he cannot [ever] enter the kingdom of God.

6 What is born of [from] the flesh is flesh [of the physical is physical]; and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not [do not be surprised, astonished] at My telling you, You must all be born anew (from above).

8 The wind blows (breathes) where it wills; and though you hear its sound, yet you neither know where it comes from nor where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered by asking, How can all this be possible?

10 Jesus replied, Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet do not know *nor* understand these things? [Are they strange to you?]

11 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, We speak only of what we know [we know absolutely what we are talking about]; we have actually seen what we are testifying to [we were eyewitnesses of it]. And still you do not receive our testimony [you reject and refuse our evidence—that of Myself and of all those who are born of the Spirit].

12 If I have told you of things that happen right here on the earth and yet none of you believes Me, how can you believe (trust Me, adhere to Me, rely on Me) if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And yet no one has ever gone up to heaven, but there is One Who has come down from heaven—the Son of Man [Himself], *Who is (dwells, has His home) in heaven.*

14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert [on a pole], so must [so it is necessary that] the Son of Man be lifted up [on the cross],

15 In order that everyone who believes in Him [who cleaves to Him, trusts Him, and relies on Him] may *not perish, but* have eternal life *and* [actually] live forever!

16 For God so greatly loved *and* dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten (unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life.

17 For God did not send the Son into the world in order to judge (to reject, to condemn, to pass sentence on) the world, but that the world might find salvation *and* be made safe *and* sound through Him.

18 He who believes in Him [who clings to, trusts in, relies on Him] is not judged [he who trusts in Him never comes up for judgment; for him there is no rejection, no condemnation—he incurs no damnation]; but he who does not believe (cleave to, rely on, trust in Him) is judged already [he has already been convicted and has already received his sentence] because he has not believed in *and* trusted in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [He is condemned for refusing to let his trust rest in Christ's name.]

19 The [basis of the] judgment (indictment, the test by which men are judged, the ground for the sentence) lies in this: the Light has come into the world, and people have loved the darkness rather than *and* more than the Light, for their works (deeds) were evil.

20 For every wrongdoer hates (loathes, detests) the Light, and will not come out into the Light *but* shrinks from it, lest his works (his deeds, his activities, his conduct) be exposed *and* reproved.

21 But he who practices truth [who does what is right] comes out into the Light; so that his works may be plainly shown to be what they are—wrought with God [divinely prompted, done with God’s help, in dependence upon Him].

22 After this, Jesus and His disciples went into the land (the countryside) of Judea, where He remained with them, and baptized.

23 But John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, for there was an abundance of water there, and the people kept coming and being baptized.

24 For John had not yet been thrown into prison.

25 Therefore there arose a controversy between some of John’s disciples and a Jew in regard to purification.

26 So they came to John and reported to him, Rabbi, the Man Who was with you on the other side of the Jordan [at the Jordan crossing]—and to Whom you yourself have borne testimony—notice, here He is baptizing too, and everybody is flocking to Him!

27 John answered, A man can receive nothing [he can claim nothing, he can take unto himself nothing] except as it has been granted to him from heaven. [A man must be content to receive the gift which is given him from heaven; there is no other source.]

28 You yourselves are my witnesses [you personally bear me out] that I stated, I am not the Christ (the Anointed One, the Messiah), but I have [only] been sent before Him [in advance of Him, to be His appointed forerunner, His messenger, His announcer].

29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the groomsman who stands by and listens to him rejoices greatly *and* heartily on account of the bridegroom’s voice. This then is my pleasure *and* joy, and it is now complete.

30 He must increase, but I must decrease. [He must grow more prominent; I must grow less so.]

31 He Who comes from above (heaven) is [far] above all [others]; he who comes from the earth belongs to the earth, and talks the language of earth [his words are from an earthly standpoint]. He Who comes from heaven is [far] above all others [far superior to all others in prominence and in excellence].

32 It is to what He has [actually] seen and heard that He bears testimony, and yet no one accepts His testimony [no one receives His evidence as true].

33 Whoever receives His testimony has set his seal of approval to this: God is true. [That man has definitely certified, acknowledged, declared once and for all, and is himself assured that it is divine truth that God cannot lie].

34 For since He Whom God has sent speaks the words of God [proclaims God’s own message], God does not give Him His Spirit sparingly *or* by measure, *but* boundless is the gift God makes of His Spirit!

4

35 The Father loves the Son and has given (entrusted, committed) everything into His hand.

36 And he who believes in (has faith in, clings to, relies on) the Son has (now possesses) eternal life. But whoever disobeys (is unbelieving toward, refuses to trust in, disregards, is not subject to) the Son will never see (experience) life, but [instead] the wrath of God abides on him. [God's displeasure remains on him; His indignation hangs over him continually.]

NOW WHEN the Lord knew (learned, became aware) that the Pharisees had been told that Jesus was winning and baptizing more disciples than John—

2 Though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples—

3 He left Judea and returned to Galilee.

4 It was necessary for Him to go through Samaria.

5 And in doing so, He arrived at a Samaritan town called Sychar, near the tract of land that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 And Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, tired as He was from His journey, sat down [to rest] by the well. It was then about the sixth hour (about noon).

7 Presently, when a woman of Samaria came along to draw water, Jesus said to her, Give Me a drink—

8 For His disciples had gone off into the town to buy food—

9 The Samaritan woman said to Him, How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan [and a] woman, for a drink?—For the Jews have nothing to do with the Samaritans—

10 Jesus answered her, If you had only known *and* had recognized God's gift and Who this is that is saying to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him [instead] and He would have given you living water.

11 She said to Him, Sir, You have nothing to draw with [no drawing bucket] and the well is deep; how then can You provide living water? [Where do You get Your living water?]

12 Are You greater than *and* superior to our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well and who used to drink from it himself, and his sons and his cattle also?

13 Jesus answered her, All who drink of this water will be thirsty again.

14 But whoever takes a drink of the water that I will give him shall never, no never, be thirsty any more. But the water that I will give him shall become a spring of water welling up (flowing, bubbling) [continually] within him unto (into, for) eternal life.

15 The woman said to Him, Sir, give me this water, so that I may never get thirsty nor have to come [continually all the way] here to draw.

16 At this, Jesus said to her, Go, call your husband and come back here.

17 The woman answered, I have no husband. Jesus said to her, You have spoken truly in saying, I have no husband.

18 For you have had five husbands, and the man you are now living with is not your husband. In this you have spoken truly.

19 The woman said to Him, Sir, I see *and* understand that You are a prophet.

20 Our forefathers worshiped on this mountain, but you [Jews] say that Jerusalem is the place where it is necessary *and* proper to worship.

21 Jesus said to her, Woman, believe Me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither [merely] in this mountain nor [merely] in Jerusalem.

22 You [Samaritans] do not know what you are worshiping [you worship what you do not comprehend]. We do know what we are worshiping [we worship what we have knowledge of and understand], for [after all] salvation comes from [among] the Jews.

23 A time will come, however, indeed it is already here, when the true (genuine) worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth (reality); for the Father is seeking just such people as these as His worshipers.

24 God is a Spirit (a spiritual Being) and those who worship Him must worship *Him* in spirit and in truth (reality).

25 The woman said to Him, I know that Messiah is coming, He Who is called the Christ (the Anointed One); and when He arrives, He will tell us everything we need to know *and* make it clear to us.

26 Jesus said to her, I Who now speak with you am He.

27 Just then His disciples came and they wondered (were surprised, astonished) to find Him talking with a woman [a married woman]. However, not one of them asked Him, What are You inquiring about? *or* What do You want? *or*, Why do You speak with her?

28 Then the woman left her water jar and went away to the town. And she began telling the people,

29 Come, see a Man Who has told me everything that I ever did! Can this be [is not this] the Christ? [Must not this be the Messiah, the Anointed One?]

30 So the people left the town and set out to go to Him.

31 Meanwhile, the disciples urged Him saying, Rabbi, eat something.

32 But He assured them, I have food (nourishment) to eat of which you know nothing *and* have no idea.

33 So the disciples said one to another, Has someone brought Him something to eat?

34 Jesus said to them, My food (nourishment) is to do the will (pleasure) of Him Who sent Me and to accomplish *and* completely finish His work.

35 Do you not say, It is still four months until harvest time comes? Look! I tell you, raise your eyes and observe the fields *and* see how they are already white for harvesting.

36 Already the reaper is getting his wages [he who does the cutting now has his reward], for he is gathering fruit (crop) unto life eternal, so that he who does the planting and he who does the reaping may rejoice together.

37 For in this the saying holds true, One sows and another reaps.

38 I sent you to reap a crop for which you have not toiled. Other men have labored and you have stepped in to reap the results of their work.

39 Now numerous Samaritans from that town believed in *and* trusted in Him because of what the woman said when she declared *and* testified, He told me everything that I ever did.

40 So when the Samaritans arrived, they asked Him to remain with them, and He did stay there two days.

41 Then many more believed in *and* adhered to *and* relied on Him because of His personal message [what He Himself said].

42 And they told the woman, Now we no longer believe (trust, have faith) just because of what you said; for we have heard Him ourselves [personally], and we know that He truly is the Savior of the world, *the Christ*.

43 But after these two days Jesus went on from there into Galilee—

44 Although He Himself declared that a prophet has no honor in his own country.

45 However, when He came into Galilee, the Galileans also welcomed Him *and* took Him to their hearts eagerly, for they had seen everything that He did in Jerusalem during the Feast; for they too had attended the Feast.

46 So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee, where He had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son was lying ill in Capernaum.

47 Having heard that Jesus had come back from Judea into Galilee, he went away to meet Him and began to beg Him to come down and cure his son, for he was lying at the point of death.

48 Then Jesus said to him, Unless you see signs and miracles happen, you [people] never will believe (trust, have faith) at all.

49 The king's officer pleaded with Him, Sir, do come down at once before my little child is dead!

50 Jesus answered him, Go in peace; your son will live! And the man put his trust in what Jesus said and started home.

51 But even as he was on the road going down, his servants met him and reported, saying, Your son lives!

52 So he asked them at what time he had begun to get better. They said, Yesterday during the seventh hour (about one o'clock in the afternoon) the fever left him.

53 Then the father knew that it was at that very hour when Jesus had said to him, Your son will live. And he and his entire household believed (adhered to, trusted in, and relied on Jesus).

54 This is the second sign (wonderwork, miracle) that Jesus performed after He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

5

LATER ON there was a Jewish festival (feast) for which Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now there is in Jerusalem a pool near the Sheep Gate. This pool in the Hebrew is called Bethesda, having five porches (alcoves, colonnades, doorways).

3 In these lay a great number of sick folk—some blind, some crippled, and some paralyzed (shriveled up)—*waiting for the bubbling up of the water.*

4 *For an angel of the Lord went down at appointed seasons into the pool and moved and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was cured of whatever disease with which he was afflicted.*

5 There was a certain man there who had suffered with a deep-seated *and* lingering disorder for thirty-eight years.

6 When Jesus noticed him lying there [helpless], knowing that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, Do you want to become well? [Are you really in earnest about getting well?]

7 The invalid answered, Sir, I have nobody when the water is moving to put me into the pool; but while I am trying to come [into it] myself, somebody else steps down ahead of me.

8 Jesus said to him, Get up! Pick up your bed (sleeping pad) and walk!

9 Instantly the man became well *and* recovered his strength and picked up his bed and walked. But that happened on the Sabbath.

10 So the Jews kept saying to the man who had been healed, It is the Sabbath, and you have no right to pick up your bed [it is not lawful].

11 He answered them, The Man Who healed me *and* gave me back my strength, He Himself said to me, Pick up your bed and walk!

12 They asked him, Who is the Man Who told you, Pick up your bed and walk?

13 Now the invalid who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had quietly gone away [had passed on unnoticed], since there was a crowd in the place.

14 Afterward, when Jesus found him in the temple, He said to him, See, you are well! Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.

15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus Who had made him well.

16 For this reason the Jews began to persecute (annoy, torment) Jesus *and sought to kill Him*, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father has worked [even] until now, [He has never ceased working; He is still working] and I, too, must be at [divine] work.

18 This made the Jews more determined than ever to kill Him [to do away with Him]; because He not only was breaking (weakening, violating) the Sabbath, but He actually was speaking of God as being [in a special sense] His own Father, making Himself equal [putting Himself on a level] with God.

19 So Jesus answered them by saying, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, the Son is able to do nothing of Himself (of His own accord); but He is able to do only what He sees the Father doing, for whatever the Father does is what the Son does in the same way [in His turn].

20 The Father dearly loves the Son and discloses to (shows) Him everything that He Himself does. And He will disclose to Him (let Him see) greater things yet than these, so that you may marvel *and* be full of wonder *and* astonishment.

21 Just as the Father raises up the dead and gives them life [makes them live on], even so the Son also gives life to whomever He wills *and* is pleased to give it.

22 Even the Father judges no one, for He has given all judgment (the last judgment and the whole business of judging) entirely into the hands of the Son,

23 So that all men may give honor (reverence, homage) to the Son just as they give honor to the Father. [In fact] whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, Who has sent Him.

24 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, the person whose ears are open to My words [who listens to My message] and believes *and* trusts in *and* clings to *and* relies on Him Who sent Me has (possesses now) eternal life. And he does not come into judgment [does not incur sentence of judgment, will not come under condemnation], but he has already passed over out of death into life.

25 Believe Me when I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, the time is coming and is here now when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear it shall live.

26 For even as the Father has life in Himself *and* is self-existent, so He has given to the Son to have life in Himself *and* be self-existent.

27 And He has given Him authority *and* granted Him power to execute (exercise, practice) judgment because He is a Son of man [very man].

28 Do not be surprised *and* wonder at this, for the time is coming when all those who are in the tombs shall hear His voice,

29 And they shall come out—those who have practiced doing good [will come out] to the resurrection of [new] life, and those who have done evil will be raised for judgment [raised to meet their sentence].

30 I am able to do nothing from Myself [independently, of My own accord—but only as I am taught by God and as I get His orders]. Even as I

hear, I judge [I decide as I am bidden to decide. As the voice comes to Me, so I give a decision], and My judgment is right (just, righteous), because I do not seek *or* consult My own will [I have no desire to do what is pleasing to Myself, My own aim, My own purpose] but only the will *and* pleasure of the Father Who sent Me.

31 If I alone testify in My behalf, My testimony is not valid *and* cannot be worth anything.

32 There is Another Who testifies concerning Me, and I know *and* am certain that His evidence on My behalf is true and valid.

33 You yourselves have sent [an inquiry] to John and he has been a witness to the truth.

34 But I do not receive [a mere] human witness [the evidence which I accept on My behalf is not from man]; but I simply mention all these things in order that you may be saved (made and kept safe and sound).

35 John was the lamp that kept on burning and shining [to show you the way], and you were willing for a while to delight (sun) yourselves in his light.

36 But I have as My witness something greater (weightier, higher, better) than that of John; for the works that the Father has appointed Me to accomplish *and* finish, the very same works that I am now doing, are a witness *and* proof that the Father has sent Me.

37 And the Father Who sent Me has Himself testified concerning Me. Not one of you has ever given ear to His voice or seen His form (His face—what He is like). [You have always been deaf to His voice and blind to the vision of Him.]

38 And you have not His word (His thought) living in your hearts, because you do not believe *and* adhere to *and* trust in *and* rely on Him Whom He has sent. [That is why you do not keep His message living in you, because you do not believe in the Messenger Whom He has sent.]

39 You search *and* investigate *and* pore over the Scriptures diligently, because you suppose *and* trust that you have eternal life through them. And these [very Scriptures] testify about Me!

40 And still you are not willing [but refuse] to come to Me, so that you might have life.

41 I receive not glory from men [I crave no human honor, I look for no mortal fame],

42 But I know you and recognize *and* understand that you have not the love of God in you.

43 I have come in My Father's name *and* with His power, and you do not receive Me [your hearts are not open to Me, you give Me no welcome]; but if another comes in his own name *and* his own power *and* with no other authority but himself, you will receive him *and* give him your approval.

44 How is it possible for you to believe [how can you learn to believe], you who [are content to seek and] receive praise *and* honor *and* glory from

one another, and yet do not seek the praise *and* honor *and* glory which come from Him Who alone is God?

45 Put out of your minds the thought *and* do not suppose [as some of you are supposing] that I will accuse you before the Father. There is one who accuses you—it is Moses, the very one on whom you have built your hopes [in whom you trust].

46 For if you believed *and* relied on Moses, you would believe *and* rely on Me, for he wrote about Me [personally].

47 But if you do not believe *and* trust his writings, how then will you believe *and* trust My teachings? [How shall you cleave to and rely on My words?]

6

AFTER THIS, Jesus went to the farther side of the Sea of Galilee—that is, the Sea of Tiberias.

2 And a great crowd was following Him because they had seen the signs (miracles) which He [continually] performed upon those who were sick.

3 And Jesus walked up the mountainside and sat down there with His disciples.

4 Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was approaching.

5 Jesus looked up then, and seeing that a vast multitude was coming toward Him, He said to Philip, Where are we to buy bread, so that all these people may eat?

6 But He said this to prove (test) him, for He well knew what He was about to do.

7 Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennies' (forty dollars) worth of bread is not enough that everyone may receive even a little.

8 Another of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him,

9 There is a little boy here, who has [with him] five barley loaves, and two small fish; but what are they among so many people?

10 Jesus said, Make all the people recline (sit down). Now the ground (a pasture) was covered with thick grass at the spot, so the men threw themselves down, about 5,000 in number.

11 Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks, He distributed *to the disciples and the disciples* to the reclining people; so also [He did] with the fish, as much as they wanted.

12 When they had all had enough, He said to His disciples, Gather up now the fragments (the broken pieces that are left over), so that nothing may be lost *and* wasted.

13 So accordingly they gathered them up, and they filled twelve [small hand] baskets with fragments left over by those who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

14 When the people saw the sign (miracle) that Jesus had performed, they began saying, Surely *and* beyond a doubt this is the Prophet Who is to come into the world!

15 Then Jesus, knowing that they meant to come and seize Him that they might make Him king, withdrew again to the hillside by Himself alone.

16 When evening came, His disciples went down to the sea,

17 And they took a boat and were going across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and still Jesus had not [yet] come back to them.

18 Meanwhile, the sea was getting rough *and* rising high because of a great *and* violent wind that was blowing.

19 [However] when they had rowed three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and approaching the boat. And they were afraid (terrified).

20 But Jesus said to them, It is I; be not afraid! [I AM; stop being frightened!]

21 Then they were quite willing *and* glad for Him to come into the boat. And now the boat went at once to the land they had steered toward. [And immediately they reached the shore toward which they had been slowly making their way.]

22 The next day the crowd [that still remained] standing on the other side of the sea realized that there had been only one small boat there, and that Jesus had not gone into it with His disciples, but that His disciples had gone away by themselves.

23 But now some other boats from Tiberias had come in near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks.

24 So the people, finding that neither Jesus nor His disciples were there, themselves got into the small boats and came to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

25 And when they found Him on the other side of the lake, they said to Him, Rabbi! When did You come here?

26 Jesus answered them, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, you have been searching for Me, not because you saw the miracles *and* signs but because you were fed with the loaves and were filled *and* satisfied.

27 Stop toiling *and* doing *and* producing for the food that perishes *and* decomposes [in the using], but strive *and* work *and* produce rather for the [lasting] food which endures [continually] unto life eternal; the Son of Man will give (furnish) you that, for God the Father has authorized *and* certified Him *and* put His seal of endorsement upon Him.

28 They then said, What are we to do, that we may [habitually] be working the works of God? [What are we to do to carry out what God requires?]

29 Jesus replied, This is the work (service) that God asks of you: that you believe in the One Whom He has sent [that you cleave to, trust, rely on, and have faith in His Messenger].

30 Therefore they said to Him, What sign (miracle, wonderwork) will You perform then, so that we may see it and believe *and* rely on *and* adhere to You? What [supernatural] work have You [to show what You can do]?

31 Our forefathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as the Scripture says, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.

32 Jesus then said to them, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, Moses did not give you the Bread from heaven [what Moses gave you was not the Bread from heaven], but it is My Father Who gives you the true heavenly Bread.

33 For the Bread of God is He Who comes down out of heaven and gives life to the world.

34 Then they said to Him, Lord, give us this bread always (all the time)!

35 Jesus replied, I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to Me will never be hungry, and he who believes in *and* cleaves to *and* trusts in *and* relies on Me will never thirst any more (at any time).

36 But [as] I told you, although you have seen Me, still you do not believe *and* trust *and* have faith.

37 All whom My Father gives (entrusts) to Me will come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will most certainly not cast out [I will never, no never, reject one of them who comes to Me].

38 For I have come down from heaven not to do My own will *and* purpose but to do the will *and* purpose of Him Who sent Me.

39 And this is the will of Him Who sent Me, that I should not lose any of all that He has given Me, but that I should give new life *and* raise [them all] up at the last day.

40 For this is My Father's will *and* His purpose, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in *and* cleaves to *and* trusts in *and* relies on Him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up [from the dead] at the last day.

41 Now the Jews murmured *and* found fault with *and* grumbled about Jesus because He said, I am [Myself] the Bread that came down from heaven.

42 They kept asking, Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, Whose father and mother we know? How then can He say, I have come down from heaven?

43 So Jesus answered them, Stop grumbling *and* saying things against Me to one another.

44 No one is able to come to Me unless the Father Who sent Me attracts *and* draws him *and* gives him the desire to come to Me, and [then] I will raise him up [from the dead] at the last day.

45 It is written in [the book of] the Prophets, And they shall all be taught of God [have Him in person for their Teacher]. Everyone who has listened to and learned from the Father comes to Me—

46 Which does not imply that anyone has seen the Father [not that anyone has ever seen Him] except He [Who was with the Father] Who comes from God; He [alone] has seen the Father.

47 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, he who believes *in Me* [who adheres to, trusts in, relies on, and has faith in Me] has (now possesses) eternal life.

48 I am the Bread of Life [that gives life—the Living Bread].

49 Your forefathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and [yet] they died.

50 [But] this is the Bread that comes down from heaven, so that [any]one may eat of it and never die.

51 I [Myself] am this Living Bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this Bread, he will live forever; and also the Bread that I shall give for the life of the world is My flesh (body).

52 Then the Jews angrily contended with one another, saying, How is He able to give us His flesh to eat?

53 And Jesus said to them, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, you cannot have any life in you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood [unless you appropriate His life and the saving merit of His blood].

54 He who feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood has (possesses now) eternal life, and I will raise him up [from the dead] on the last day.

55 For My flesh is true *and* genuine food, and My blood is true *and* genuine drink.

56 He who feeds on My flesh and drinks My blood dwells continually in Me, and I [in like manner dwell continually] in him.

57 Just as the living Father sent Me and I live by (through, because of) the Father, even so whoever continues to feed on Me [whoever takes Me for his food *and* is nourished by Me] shall [in his turn] live through *and* because of Me.

58 This is the Bread that came down from heaven. It is not like the manna which our forefathers ate, and yet died; he who takes this Bread for his food shall live forever.

59 He said these things in a synagogue while He was teaching at Capernaum.

60 When His disciples heard this, many of them said, This is a hard *and* difficult *and* strange saying (an offensive and unbearable message). Who can stand to hear it? [Who can be expected to listen to such teaching?]

61 But Jesus, knowing within Himself that His disciples were complaining *and* protesting *and* grumbling about it, said to them: Is this a stumbling block *and* an offense to you? [Does this upset and displease and shock and scandalize you?]

62 What then [will be your reaction] if you should see the Son of Man ascending to [the place] where He was before?

63 It is the Spirit Who gives life [He is the Life-giver]; the flesh conveys no benefit whatever [there is no profit in it]. The words (truths) that I have been speaking to you are spirit and life.

64 But [still] some of you fail to believe *and* trust *and* have faith. For Jesus knew from the first who did not believe *and* had no faith *and* who would betray Him *and* be false to Him.

65 And He said, This is why I told you that no one can come to Me unless it is granted him [unless he is enabled to do so] by the Father.

66 After this, many of His disciples drew back (returned to their old associations) and no longer accompanied Him.

67 Jesus said to the Twelve, Will you also go away? [And do you too desire to leave Me?]

68 Simon Peter answered, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words (the message) of eternal life.

69 And we have learned to believe *and* trust, and [more] we have come to know [surely] that You are *the Holy One of God*, the Christ (the Anointed One), the Son of the living God.

70 Jesus answered them, Did I not choose you, the Twelve? And [yet] one of you is a devil (of the evil one and a false accuser).

71 He was speaking of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he was about to betray Him, [although] he was one of the Twelve.

7

AFTER THIS, Jesus went from place to place in Galilee, for He would not travel in Judea because the Jews were seeking to kill Him.

2 Now the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles was drawing near.

3 So His brothers said to Him, Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples [there] may also see the works that You do. [This is no place for You.]

4 For no one does anything in secret when he wishes to be conspicuous *and* secure publicity. If You [must] do these things [if You must act like this], show Yourself openly *and* make Yourself known to the world!

5 For [even] His brothers did not believe in *or* adhere to *or* trust in *or* rely on Him either.

6 Whereupon Jesus said to them, My time (opportunity) has not come yet; but any time is suitable for you *and* your opportunity is ready any time [is always here].

7 The world cannot [be expected to] hate you, but it does hate Me because I denounce it for its wicked works *and* reveal that its doings are evil.

8 Go to the Feast yourselves. I am not [yet] going up to the Festival, because My time is not ripe. [My term is not yet completed; it is not time for Me to go.]

9 Having said these things to them, He stayed behind in Galilee.

10 But afterward, when His brothers had gone up to the Feast, He went up also, not publicly [not with a caravan], but by Himself quietly *and* as if He did not wish to be observed.

11 Therefore the Jews kept looking for Him at the Feast and asking, Where can He be? [Where is that Fellow?]

12 And there was among the mass of the people much whispered discussion *and* hot disputing about Him. Some were saying, He is good! [He is a good Man!] Others said, No, He misleads *and* deceives the people [gives them false ideas]!

13 But no one dared speak out boldly about Him for fear of [the leaders of] the Jews.

14 When the Feast was already half over, Jesus went up into the temple [court] and began to teach.

15 The Jews were astonished. They said, How is it that this Man has learning [is so versed in the sacred Scriptures and in theology] when He has never studied?

16 Jesus answered them by saying, My teaching is not My own, but His Who sent Me.

17 If any man desires to do His will (God's pleasure), he will know (have the needed illumination to recognize, and can tell for himself) whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking from Myself *and* of My own accord *and* on My own authority.

18 He who speaks on his own authority seeks to win honor for himself. [He whose teaching originates with himself seeks his own glory.] But He Who seeks the glory *and* is eager for the honor of Him Who sent Him, He is true; and there is no unrighteousness *or* falsehood *or* deception in Him.

19 Did not Moses give you the Law? And yet not one of you keeps the Law. [If that is the truth] why do you seek to kill Me [for not keeping it]?

20 The crowd answered Him, You are possessed by a demon! [You are raving!] Who seeks to kill You?

21 Jesus answered them, I did one work, and you all are astounded.

22 Now Moses established circumcision among you—though it did not originate with Moses but with the previous patriarchs—and you circumcise a person [even] on the Sabbath day.

23 If, to avoid breaking the Law of Moses, a person undergoes circumcision on the Sabbath day, have you any cause to be angry with (indignant with, bitter against) Me for making a man's whole body well on the Sabbath?

24 Be honest in your judgment *and* do not decide at a glance (superficially and by appearances); but judge fairly *and* righteously.

25 Then some of the Jerusalem people said, Is not this the Man they seek to kill?

26 And here He is speaking openly, and they say nothing to Him! Can it be possible that the rulers have discovered *and* know that this is truly the Christ?

27 No, we know where this Man comes from; when the Christ arrives, no one is to know from what place He comes.

28 Whereupon Jesus called out as He taught in the temple [porches], Do you know Me, and do you know where I am from? I have not come on My own authority *and* of My own accord *and* as self-appointed, but the One Who sent Me is true (real, genuine, steadfast); and Him you do not know!

29 I know Him [Myself] because I come from His [very] presence, and it was He [personally] Who sent Me.

30 Therefore they were eager to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him, for His hour (time) had not yet come.

31 And besides, many of the multitude believed in Him [adhered to Him, trusted in Him, relied on Him]. And they kept saying, When the Christ comes, will He do [can He be expected to do] more miracles *and* produce more proofs *and* signs than what this Man has done?

32 The Pharisees learned how the people were saying these things about Him under their breath; and the chief priests and Pharisees sent attendants (guards) to arrest Him.

33 Therefore Jesus said, For a little while I am [still] with you, and then I go back to Him Who sent Me.

34 You will look for Me, but you will not [be able to] find Me; where I am, you cannot come.

35 Then the Jews said among themselves, Where does this Man intend to go that we shall not find Him? Will He go to the Jews who are scattered in the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?

36 What does this statement of His mean, You will look for Me and not be able to find Me, and, Where I am, you cannot come?

37 Now on the final and most important day of the Feast, Jesus stood, and He cried in a loud voice, If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink!

38 He who believes in Me [who cleaves to *and* trusts in *and* relies on Me] as the Scripture has said, From his innermost being shall flow [continuously] springs *and* rivers of living water.

39 But He was speaking here of the Spirit, Whom those who believed (trusted, had faith) in Him were afterward to receive. For the [Holy] Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (raised to honor).

40 Listening to those words, some of the multitude said, This is certainly *and* beyond doubt the Prophet!

41 Others said, This is the Christ (the Messiah, Anointed One)! But some said, What? Does the Christ come out of Galilee?

42 Does not the Scripture tell us that the Christ will come from the offspring of David and from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?

43 So there arose a division *and* dissension among the people concerning Him.

44 Some of them wanted to arrest Him, but no one [ventured and] laid hands on Him.

45 Meanwhile the attendants (guards) had gone back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, Why have you not brought Him here with you?

46 The attendants replied, Never has a man talked as this Man talks! [No mere man has ever spoken as He speaks!]

47 The Pharisees said to them, Are you also deluded *and* led astray? [Are you also swept off your feet?]

48 Has any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in Him?

49 As for this multitude (rabble) that does not know the Law, they are contemptible *and* doomed *and* accursed!

50 Then Nicodemus, who came to Jesus before at night and was one of them, asked,

51 Does our Law convict a man without giving him a hearing and finding out what he has done?

52 They answered him, Are you too from Galilee? Search [the Scriptures yourself], and you will see that no prophet comes (will rise to prominence) from Galilee.

53 And they went [back], each to his own house.

8

BUT JESUS went to the Mount of Olives.

2 Early in the morning (at dawn), He came back into the temple [court], and the people came to Him in crowds. He sat down and was teaching them,

3 When the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. They made her stand in the middle of the court and put the case before Him.

4 Teacher, they said, This woman has been caught in the very act of adultery.

5 Now Moses in the Law commanded us that such [women—offenders] shall be stoned to death. But what do You say [to do with her—what is Your sentence]?

6 This they said to try (test) Him, hoping they might find a charge on which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger.

7 However, when they persisted with their question, He raised Himself up and said, Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.

8 Then He bent down and went on writing on the ground with His finger.

9 They listened to Him, and then they began going out, conscience-stricken, one by one, from the oldest down to the last one of them, till Jesus was left alone, with the woman standing there before Him in the center of the court.

10 When Jesus raised Himself up, He said to her, Woman, where are your accusers? Has no man condemned you?

11 She answered, No one, Lord! And Jesus said, I do not condemn you either. Go on your way and from now on sin no more.

12 Once more Jesus addressed the crowd. He said, I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me will not be walking in the dark, but will have the Light which is Life.

13 Whereupon the Pharisees told Him, You are testifying on Your own behalf; Your testimony is not valid *and* is worthless.

14 Jesus answered, Even if I do testify on My own behalf, My testimony is true *and* reliable *and* valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.

15 You [set yourselves up to] judge according to the flesh (by what you see). [You condemn by external, human standards.] I do not [set Myself up to] judge *or* condemn *or* sentence anyone.

16 Yet even if I do judge, My judgment is true [My decision is right]; for I am not alone [in making it], but [there are two of Us] I and the Father, Who sent Me.

17 In your [own] Law it is written that the testimony (evidence) of two persons is reliable *and* valid.

18 I am One [of the Two] bearing testimony concerning Myself; and My Father, Who sent Me, He also testifies about Me.

19 Then they said to Him, Where is this Father of Yours? Jesus answered, You know My Father as little as you know Me. If you knew Me, you would know My Father also.

20 Jesus said these things in the treasury while He was teaching in the temple [court]; but no one ventured to arrest Him, because His hour had not yet come.

21 Therefore He said again to them, I am going away, and you will be looking for Me, and you will die in (under the curse of) your sin. Where I am going, it is not possible for you to come.

22 At this the Jews began to ask among themselves, Will He kill Himself? Is that why He says, Where I am going, it is not possible for you to come?

23 He said to them, You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world (of this earthly order); I am not of this world.

24 That is why I told you that you will die in (under the curse of) your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He [Whom I claim to be—if you do not adhere to, trust in, and rely on Me], you will die in your sins.

25 Then they said to Him, Who are You anyway? Jesus replied, [Why do I even speak to you!] I am exactly what I have been telling you from the first.

26 I have much to say about you and to judge *and* condemn. But He Who sent Me is true (reliable), and I tell the world [only] the things that I have heard from Him.

27 They did not perceive (know, understand) that He was speaking to them about the Father.

28 So Jesus added, When you have lifted up the Son of Man [on the cross], you will realize (know, understand) that I am He [for Whom you look] and that I do nothing of Myself (of My own accord or on My own authority), but I say [exactly] what My Father has taught Me.

29 And He Who sent Me is ever with Me; My Father has not left Me alone, for I always do what pleases Him.

30 As He said these things, many believed in Him [trusted, relied on, and adhered to Him].

31 So Jesus said to those Jews who had believed in Him, If you abide in My word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples.

32 And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free.

33 They answered Him, We are Abraham's offspring (descendants) and have never been in bondage to anybody. What do You mean by saying, You will be set free?

34 Jesus answered them, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, Whoever commits *and* practices sin is the slave of sin.

35 Now a slave does not remain in a household permanently (forever); the son [of the house] does remain forever.

36 So if the Son liberates you [makes you free men], then you are really *and* unquestionably free.

37 [Yes] I know that you are Abraham's offspring; yet you plan to kill Me, because My word has no entrance (makes no progress, does not find any place) in you.

38 I tell the things which I have seen *and* learned at My Father's side, and your actions also reflect what you have heard *and* learned from your father.

39 They retorted, Abraham is our father. Jesus said, If you were [truly] Abraham's children, then you would do the works of Abraham [follow his example, do as Abraham did].

40 But now [instead] you are wanting *and* seeking to kill Me, a Man Who has told you the truth which I have heard from God. This is not the way Abraham acted.

41 You are doing the works of your [own] father. They said to Him, We are not illegitimate children *and* born out of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

42 Jesus said to them, If God were your Father, you would love Me *and* respect Me *and* welcome Me gladly, for I proceeded (came forth) from God [out of His very presence]. I did not even come on My own authority *or* of My own accord (as self-appointed); but He sent Me.

43 Why do you misunderstand what I say? It is because you are unable to hear what I am saying. [You cannot bear to listen to My message; your ears are shut to My teaching.]

44 You are of your father, the devil, and it is your will to practice the lusts *and* gratify the desires [which are characteristic] of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a falsehood, he speaks what is natural to him, for he is a liar [himself] and the father of lies *and* of all that is false.

45 But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me [do not trust Me, do not rely on Me, or adhere to Me].

46 Who of you convicts Me of wrongdoing *or* finds Me guilty of sin? Then if I speak truth, why do you not believe Me [trust Me, rely on, and adhere to Me]?

47 Whoever is of God listens to God. [Those who belong to God hear the words of God.] This is the reason that you do not listen [to those words, to Me]: because you do not belong to God *and* are not of God *or* in harmony with Him.

48 The Jews answered Him, Are we not right when we say You are a Samaritan and that You have a demon [that You are under the power of an evil spirit]?

49 Jesus answered, I am not possessed by a demon. On the contrary, I honor *and* reverence My Father and you dishonor (despise, vilify, and scorn) Me.

50 However, I am not in search of honor for Myself. [I do not seek and am not aiming for My own glory.] There is One Who [looks after that; He] seeks [My glory], and He is the Judge.

51 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone observes My teaching [lives in accordance with My message, keeps My word], he will by no means ever see *and* experience death.

52 The Jews said to Him, Now we know that You are under the power of a demon (insane). Abraham died, and also the prophets, yet You say, If a man keeps My word, he will never taste of death into all eternity.

53 Are You greater than our father Abraham? He died, and all the prophets died! Who do You make Yourself out to be?

54 Jesus answered, If I were to glorify Myself (magnify, praise, and honor Myself), I would have no real glory, for My glory would be nothing *and* worthless. [My honor must come to Me from My Father.] It is My

Father Who glorifies Me [Who extols Me, magnifies, and praises Me], of Whom you say that He is your God.

55 Yet you do not know Him *or* recognize Him *and* are not acquainted with Him, but I know Him. If I should say that I do not know Him, I would be a liar like you. But I know Him and keep His word [obey His teachings, am faithful to His message].

56 Your forefather Abraham was extremely happy at the hope *and* prospect of seeing My day (My incarnation); and he did see it and was delighted.

57 Then the Jews said to Him, You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?

58 Jesus replied, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, before Abraham was born, I AM.

59 So they took up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus, by mixing with the crowd, concealed Himself and went out of the temple [enclosure].

9

AS HE passed along, He noticed a man blind from his birth.

2 His disciples asked Him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?

3 Jesus answered, It was not that this man or his parents sinned, but he was born blind in order that the workings of God should be manifested (displayed and illustrated) in him.

4 We must work the works of Him Who sent Me *and* be busy with His business while it is daylight; night is coming on, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the world's Light.

6 When He had said this, He spat on the ground and made clay (mud) with His saliva, and He spread it [as ointment] on the man's eyes.

7 And He said to him, Go, wash in the Pool of Siloam—which means Sent. So he went and washed, and came back seeing.

8 When the neighbors and those who used to know him by sight as a beggar saw him, they said, Is not this the man who used to sit and beg?

9 Some said, It is he. Others said, No, but he looks very much like him. But he said, Yes, I am the man.

10 So they said to him, How were your eyes opened?

11 He replied, The Man called Jesus made mud and smeared it on my eyes and said to me, Go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and I obtained my sight!

12 They asked him, Where is He? He said, I do not know.

13 Then they conducted to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind.

14 Now it was on the Sabbath day that Jesus mixed the mud and opened the man's eyes.

15 So now again the Pharisees asked him how he received his sight. And he said to them, He smeared mud on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see.

16 Then some of the Pharisees said, This Man [Jesus] is not from God, because He does not observe the Sabbath. But others said, How can a man who is a sinner (a bad man) do such signs *and* miracles? So there was a difference of opinion among them.

17 Accordingly they said to the blind man again, What do you say about Him, seeing that He opened your eyes? And he said, He is [He must be] a prophet!

18 However, the Jews did not believe that he had [really] been blind and that he had received his sight until they called (summoned) the parents of the man.

19 They asked them, Is this your son, whom you reported as having been born blind? How then does he see now?

20 His parents answered, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind.

21 But as to how he can now see, we do not know; or who has opened his eyes, we do not know. He is of age. Ask him; let him speak for himself *and* give his own account of it.

22 His parents said this because they feared [the leaders of] the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should acknowledge Jesus to be the Christ, he should be expelled *and* excluded from the synagogue.

23 On that account his parents said, He is of age; ask him.

24 So the second time they summoned the man who had been born blind, and said to him, Now give God the glory (praise). This Fellow we know is only a sinner (a wicked person).

25 Then he answered, I do not know whether He is a sinner *and* wicked or not. But one thing I do know, that whereas I was blind before, now I see.

26 So they said to him, What did He [actually] do to you? How did He open your eyes?

27 He answered, I already told you and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Can it be that you wish to become His disciples also?

28 And they stormed at him [they jeered, they sneered, they reviled him] and retorted, You are His disciple yourself, but we are the disciples of Moses.

29 We know for certain that God spoke with Moses, but as for this Fellow, we know nothing about where He hails from.

30 The man replied, Well, this is astonishing! Here a Man has opened my eyes, and yet you do not know where He comes from. [That is amazing!]

31 We know that God does not listen to sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing *and* a worshiper of Him and does His will, He listens to him.

32 Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind.

33 If this Man were not from God, He would not be able to do anything like this.

34 They retorted, You were wholly born in sin [from head to foot]; and do you [presume to] teach us? So they cast him out [threw him clear outside the synagogue].

35 Jesus heard that they had put him out, and meeting him He said, Do you believe in *and* adhere to the Son of Man *or* the Son of God?

36 He answered, Who is He, Sir? Tell me, that I may believe in *and* adhere to Him.

37 Jesus said to him, You have seen Him; [in fact] He is talking to you right now.

38 He called out, Lord, I believe! [I rely on, I trust, I cleave to You!] And he worshiped Him.

39 Then Jesus said, I came into this world for judgment [as a Separator, in order that there may be separation between those who believe on Me and those who reject Me], to make the sightless see and to make those who see become blind.

40 Some Pharisees who were near, hearing this remark, said to Him, Are we also blind?

41 Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no sin; but because you now claim to have sight, your sin remains. [If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but because you insist, We do see clearly, you are unable to escape your guilt.]

10

I ASSURE you, most solemnly I tell you, he who does not enter by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way (elsewhere, from some other quarter) is a thief and a robber.

2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 The watchman opens the door for this man, and the sheep listen to his voice *and* heed it; and he calls his own sheep by name and brings (leads) them out.

4 When he has brought his own sheep outside, he walks on before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

5 They will never [on any account] follow a stranger, but will run away from him because they do not know the voice of strangers *or* recognize their call.

6 Jesus used this parable (illustration) with them, but they did not understand what He was talking about.

7 So Jesus said again, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that I Myself am the Door for the sheep.

8 All others who came [as such] before Me are thieves and robbers, but the [true] sheep did not listen to *and* obey them.

9 I am the Door; anyone who enters in through Me will be saved (will live). He will come in and he will go out [freely], and will find pasture.

10 The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have *and* enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).

11 I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd risks *and* lays down His [own] life for the sheep.

12 But the hired servant (he who merely serves for wages) who is neither the shepherd nor the owner of the sheep, when he sees the wolf coming, deserts the flock and runs away. And the wolf chases *and* snatches them and scatters [the flock].

13 Now the hireling flees because he merely serves for wages and is not himself concerned about the sheep [cares nothing for them].

14 I am the Good Shepherd; and I know *and* recognize My own, and My own know *and* recognize Me—

15 Even as [truly as] the Father knows Me and I also know the Father—and I am giving My [very own] life *and* laying it down on behalf of the sheep.

16 And I have other sheep [beside these] that are not of this fold. I must bring *and* impel those also; and they will listen to My voice *and* heed My call, and so there will be [they will become] one flock under one Shepherd.

17 For this [reason] the Father loves Me, because I lay down My [own] life—to take it back again.

18 No one takes it away from Me. On the contrary, I lay it down voluntarily. [I put it from Myself.] I am authorized *and* have power to lay it down (to resign it) and I am authorized *and* have power to take it back again. These are the instructions (orders) which I have received [as My charge] from My Father.

19 Then a fresh division of opinion arose among the Jews because of His saying these things.

20 And many of them said, He has a demon and He is mad (insane—He raves, He rambles). Why do you listen to Him?

21 Others argued, These are not the thoughts *and* the language of one possessed. Can a demon-possessed person open blind eyes?

22 After this the Feast of Dedication [of the reconsecration of the temple] was taking place at Jerusalem. It was winter,

23 And Jesus was walking in Solomon's Porch in the temple area.

24 So the Jews surrounded Him and began asking Him, How long are

You going to keep us in doubt *and* suspense? If You are really the Christ (the Messiah), tell us so plainly *and* openly.

25 Jesus answered them, I have told you so, yet you do not believe Me [you do not trust Me *and* rely on Me]. The very works that I do by the power of My Father *and* in My Father's name bear witness concerning Me [they are My credentials and evidence in support of Me].

26 But you do not believe *and* trust *and* rely on Me because you do not belong to My fold [you are no sheep of Mine].

27 The sheep that are My own hear *and* are listening to My voice; and I know them, and they follow Me.

28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never lose it *or* perish throughout the ages. [To all eternity they shall never by any means be destroyed.] And no one is able to snatch them out of My hand.

29 My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater *and* mightier than all [else]; and no one is able to snatch [them] out of the Father's hand.

30 I and the Father are One.

31 Again the Jews brought up stones to stone Him.

32 Jesus said to them, My Father has enabled Me to do many good deeds. [I have shown many acts of mercy in your presence.] For which of these do you mean to stone Me?

33 The Jews replied, We are not going to stone You for a good act, but for blasphemy, because You, a mere Man, make Yourself [out to be] God.

34 Jesus answered, Is it not written in your Law, I said, You are gods?

35 So men are called gods [by the Law], men to whom God's message came—and the Scripture cannot be set aside *or* cancelled *or* broken *or* annulled—

36 [If that is true] do you say of the One Whom the Father consecrated *and* dedicated *and* set apart for Himself and sent into the world, You are blaspheming, because I said, I am the Son of God?

37 If I am not doing the works [performing the deeds] of My Father, then do not believe Me [do not adhere to Me and trust Me and rely on Me].

38 But if I do them, even though you do not believe Me *or* have faith in Me, [at least] believe the works *and* have faith in what I do, in order that you may know and understand [clearly] that the Father is in Me, and I am in the Father [One with Him].

39 They sought again to arrest Him, but He escaped from their hands.

40 He went back again across the Jordan to the locality where John was when he first baptized, and there He remained.

41 And many came to Him, and they kept saying, John did not perform a [single] sign *or* miracle, but everything John said about this Man was true.

42 And many [people] there became believers in Him. [They adhered to *and* trusted in *and* relied on Him.]

11

NOW A certain man named Lazarus was ill. He was of Bethany, the village where Mary and her sister Martha lived.

2 This Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped His feet with her hair. It was her brother Lazarus who was [now] sick.

3 So the sisters sent to Him, saying, Lord, he whom You love [so well] is sick.

4 When Jesus received the message, He said, This sickness is not to end in death; but [on the contrary] it is to honor God *and* to promote His glory, that the Son of God may be glorified through (by) it.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. [They were His dear friends, and He held them in loving esteem.]

6 Therefore [even] when He heard that Lazarus was sick, He still stayed two days longer in the same place where He was.

7 Then after that interval He said to His disciples, Let us go back again to Judea.

8 The disciples said to Him, Rabbi, the Jews only recently were intending *and* trying to stone You, and are You [thinking of] going back there again?

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? Anyone who walks about in the daytime does not stumble, because he sees [by] the light of this world.

10 But if anyone walks about in the night, he does stumble, because there is no light in him [the light is lacking to him].

11 He said these things, and then added, Our friend Lazarus is at rest *and* sleeping; but I am going there that I may awaken him out of his sleep.

12 The disciples answered, Lord, if he is sleeping, he will recover.

13 However, Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that He referred to falling into a refreshing *and* natural sleep.

14 So then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus is dead,

15 And for your sake I am glad that I was not there; it will help you to believe (to trust and rely on Me). However, let us go to him.

16 Then Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, Let us go too, that we may die [be killed] along with Him.

17 So when Jesus arrived, He found that he [Lazarus] had already been in the tomb four days.

18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away,

19 And a considerable number of the Jews had gone out to see Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet Him, while Mary remained sitting in the house.

21 Martha then said to Jesus, Master, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

22 And even now I know that whatever You ask from God, He will grant it to You.

23 Jesus said to her, Your brother shall rise again.

24 Martha replied, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said to her, I am [Myself] the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on) Me, although he may die, yet he shall live;

26 And whoever continues to live and believes in (has faith in, cleaves to, and relies on) Me shall never [actually] die at all. Do you believe this?

27 She said to Him, Yes, Lord, I have believed [I do believe] that You are the Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One), the Son of God, [even He] Who was to come into the world. [It is for Your coming that the world has waited.]

28 After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, privately whispering to her, The Teacher is close at hand and is asking for you.

29 When she heard this, she sprang up quickly and went to Him.

30 Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the same spot where Martha had met Him.

31 When the Jews who were sitting with her in the house and consoling her saw how hastily Mary had arisen and gone out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to pour out her grief there.

32 When Mary came to the place where Jesus was and saw Him, she dropped down at His feet, saying to Him, Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.

33 When Jesus saw her sobbing, and the Jews who came with her [also] sobbing, He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. [He chafed in spirit and sighed and was disturbed.]

34 And He said, Where have you laid him? They said to Him, Lord, come and see.

35 Jesus wept.

36 The Jews said, See how [tenderly] He loved him!

37 But some of them said, Could not He Who opened a blind man's eyes have prevented this man from dying?

38 Now Jesus, again sighing repeatedly *and* deeply disquieted, approached the tomb. It was a cave (a hole in the rock), and a boulder lay against [the entrance to close] it.

39 Jesus said, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of the dead man, exclaimed, But Lord, by this time he [is decaying and] throws off an offensive odor, for he has been dead four days!

40 Jesus said to her, Did I not tell you *and* promise you that if you would believe *and* rely on Me, you would see the glory of God?

41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.

42 Yes, I know You always hear *and* listen to Me, but I have said this on account of *and* for the benefit of the people standing around, so that they may believe that You did send Me [that You have made Me Your Messenger].

43 When He had said this, He shouted with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out!

44 And out walked the man who had been dead, his hands and feet wrapped in burial cloths (linen strips), and with a [burial] napkin bound around his face. Jesus said to them, Free him of the burial wrappings and let him go.

45 Upon seeing what Jesus had done, many of the Jews who had come with Mary believed in Him. [They trusted in Him and adhered to Him and relied on Him.]

46 But some of them went back to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

47 So the chief priests and Pharisees called a meeting of the council (the Sanhedrin) and said, What are we to do? For this Man performs many signs (evidences, miracles).

48 If we let Him alone to go on like this, everyone will believe in Him *and* adhere to Him, and the Romans will come and suppress *and* destroy *and* take away our [holy] place and our nation [our temple and city and our civil organization].

49 But one of them, Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year, declared, You know nothing at all!

50 Nor do you understand *or* reason out that it is expedient *and* better for your own welfare that one man should die on behalf of the people than that the whole nation should perish (be destroyed, ruined).

51 Now he did not say this simply of his own accord [he was not self-moved]; but being the high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was to die for the nation,

52 And not only for the nation but also for the purpose of uniting into one body the children of God who have been scattered far and wide.

53 So from that day on they took counsel *and* plotted together how they might put Him to death.

54 For that reason Jesus no longer appeared publicly among the Jews, but left there and retired to the district that borders on the wilderness (the desert), to a village called Ephraim, and there He stayed with the disciples.

55 Now the Jewish Passover was at hand, and many from the country went up to Jerusalem in order that they might purify *and* consecrate themselves before the Passover.

12

56 So they kept looking for Jesus and questioned among themselves as they were standing about in the temple [area], What do you think? Will He not come to the Feast at all?

57 Now the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he should report it to them, so that they might arrest Him.

SO SIX days before the Passover Feast, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, who had died and whom He had raised from the dead.

2 So they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those at the table with Him.

3 Mary took a pound of ointment of pure liquid nard [a rare perfume] that was very expensive, and she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. And the whole house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

4 But Judas Iscariot, the one of His disciples who was about to betray Him, said,

5 Why was this perfume not sold for 300 denarii [a year's wages for an ordinary workman] and that [money] given to the poor (the destitute)?

6 Now he did not say this because he cared for the poor but because he was a thief; and having the bag (the money box, the purse of the Twelve), he took for himself what was put into it [pilfering the collections].

7 But Jesus said, Let her alone. It was [intended] that she should keep it for the time of My preparation for burial. [She has kept it that she might have it for the time of My embalming.]

8 You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me.

9 Now a great crowd of the Jews heard that He was at Bethany, and they came there, not only because of Jesus but that they also might see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.

10 So the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also,

11 Because on account of him many of the Jews were going away [were withdrawing from and leaving the Judeans] and believing in *and* adhering to Jesus.

12 The next day a vast crowd of those who had come to the Passover Feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

13 So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him. And as they went, they kept shouting, Hosanna! Blessed is He *and* praise to Him Who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!

14 And Jesus, having found a young donkey, rode upon it, [just] as it is written in the Scriptures,

15 Do not fear, O Daughter of Zion! Look! Your King is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!

16 His disciples did not understand *and* could not comprehend the meaning of these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified *and* exalted, they remembered that these things had been written about Him and had been done to Him.

17 The group that had been with Jesus when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from among the dead kept telling it [bearing witness] to others.

18 It was for this reason that the crowd went out to meet Him, because they had heard that He had performed this sign (proof, miracle).

19 Then the Pharisees said among themselves, You see how futile your efforts are *and* how you accomplish nothing. See! The whole world is running after Him!

20 Now among those who went up to worship at the Feast were some Greeks.

21 These came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and they made this request, Sir, we desire to see Jesus.

22 Philip came and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip together [went] and told Jesus.

23 And Jesus answered them, The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified *and* exalted.

24 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains [just one grain; it never becomes more but lives] by itself alone. But if it dies, it produces many others *and* yields a rich harvest.

25 Anyone who loves his life loses it, but anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. [Whoever has no love for, no concern for, no regard for his life here on earth, but despises it, preserves his life forever and ever.]

26 If anyone serves Me, he must continue to follow Me [to cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying] and wherever I am, there will My servant be also. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him.

27 Now My soul is troubled *and* distressed, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour [of trial and agony]? But it was for this very purpose that I have come to this hour [that I might undergo it].

28 [Rather, I will say,] Father, glorify (honor and extol) Your [own] name! Then there came a voice out of heaven saying, I have already glorified it, and I will glorify it again.

29 The crowd of bystanders heard the sound and said that it had thundered; others said, An angel has spoken to Him!

30 Jesus answered, This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sake.

31 Now the judgment (crisis) of this world is coming on [sentence is now being passed on this world]. Now the ruler (evil genius, prince) of this world shall be cast out (expelled).

32 And I, if *and* when I am lifted up from the earth [on the cross], will draw *and* attract all men [Gentiles as well as Jews] to Myself.

33 He said this to signify in what manner He would die.

34 At this the people answered Him, We have learned from the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; how then can You say, The Son of Man must be lifted up [on the cross]? Who is this Son of Man?

35 So Jesus said to them, You will have the Light only a little while longer. Walk while you have the Light [keep on living by it], so that darkness may not overtake *and* overcome you. He who walks about in the dark does not know where he goes [he is drifting].

36 While you have the Light, believe in the Light [have faith in it, hold to it, rely on it], that you may become sons of the Light *and* be filled with Light. Jesus said these things, and then He went away and hid Himself from them [was lost to their view].

37 Even though He had done so many miracles before them (right before their eyes), yet they still did not trust in Him *and* failed to believe in Him—

38 So that what Isaiah the prophet said was fulfilled: Lord, who has believed our report *and* our message? And to whom has the arm (the power) of the Lord been shown (unveiled and revealed)?

39 Therefore they could not believe [they were unable to believe]. For Isaiah has also said,

40 He has blinded their eyes and hardened *and* benumbed their [callous, degenerated] hearts [He has made their minds dull], to keep them from seeing with their eyes and understanding with their hearts *and* minds *and* repenting *and* turning to Me to heal them.

41 Isaiah said this because he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

42 And yet [in spite of all this] many even of the leading men (the authorities and the nobles) believed *and* trusted in Him. But because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, for fear that [if they should acknowledge Him] they would be expelled from the synagogue;

43 For they loved the approval *and* the praise *and* the glory that come from men [instead of and] more than the glory that comes from God. [They valued their credit with men more than their credit with God.]

44 But Jesus loudly declared, The one who believes in Me does not [only] believe in *and* trust in *and* rely on Me, but [in believing in Me he believes] in Him Who sent Me.

45 And whoever sees Me sees Him Who sent Me.

46 I have come as a Light into the world, so that whoever believes in

Me [whoever cleaves to *and* trusts in *and* relies on Me] may not continue to live in darkness.

47 If anyone hears My teachings and fails to observe them [does not keep them, but disregards them], it is not I who judges him. For I have not come to judge *and* to condemn *and* to pass sentence *and* to inflict penalty on the world, but to save the world.

48 Anyone who rejects Me *and* persistently sets Me at naught, refusing to accept My teachings, has his judge [however]; for the [very] message that I have spoken will itself judge *and* convict him at the last day.

49 This is because I have never spoken on My own authority *or* of My own accord *or* as self-appointed, but the Father Who sent Me has Himself given Me orders [concerning] what to say and what to tell.

50 And I know that His commandment is (means) eternal life. So whatever I speak, I am saying [exactly] what My Father has told Me to say *and* in accordance with His instructions.

13

[NOW] BEFORE the Passover Feast began, Jesus knew (was fully aware) that the time had come for Him to leave this world *and* return to the Father. And as He had loved those who were His own in the world, He loved them to the last *and* to the highest degree.

2 So [it was] during supper, Satan having already put the thought of betraying Jesus in the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son,

3 [That] Jesus, knowing (fully aware) that the Father had put everything into His hands, and that He had come from God and was [now] returning to God,

4 Got up from supper, took off His garments, and taking a [servant's] towel, He fastened it around His waist.

5 Then He poured water into the washbasin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the [servant's] towel with which He was girded.

6 When He came to Simon Peter, [Peter] said to Him, Lord, are my feet to be washed by You? [Is it for You to wash my feet?]

7 Jesus said to him, You do not understand now what I am doing, but you will understand later on.

8 Peter said to Him, You shall never wash my feet! Jesus answered him, Unless I wash you, you have no part with (in) Me [you have no share in companionship with Me].

9 Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, [wash] not only my feet, but my hands and my head too!

10 Jesus said to him, Anyone who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is clean all over. And you [My disciples] are clean, but not all of you.

11 For He knew who was going to betray Him; that was the reason He said, Not all of you are clean.

12 So when He had finished washing their feet and had put on His garments and had sat down again, He said to them, Do you understand what I have done to you?

13 You call Me the Teacher (Master) and the Lord, and you are right in doing so, for that is what I am.

14 If I then, your Lord and Teacher (Master), have washed your feet, you ought [it is your duty, you are under obligation, you owe it] to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you this as an example, so that you should do [in your turn] what I have done to you.

16 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, A servant is not greater than his master, and no one who is sent is superior to the one who sent him.

17 If you know these things, blessed *and* happy *and* to be envied are you if you practice them [if you act accordingly and really do them].

18 I am not speaking of *and* I do not mean all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but it is that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He who eats My bread *with Me* has raised up his heel against Me.

19 I tell you this now before it occurs, so that when it does take place you may be persuaded *and* believe that I am He [Who I say I am—the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah].

20 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, he who receives *and* welcomes *and* takes into his heart any messenger of Mine receives Me [in just that way]; and he who receives *and* welcomes *and* takes Me into his heart receives Him Who sent Me [in that same way].

21 After Jesus had said these things, He was troubled (disturbed, agitated) in spirit and said, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, one of you will deliver Me up [one of you will be false to Me and betray Me]!

22 The disciples kept looking at one another, puzzled as to whom He could mean.

23 One of His disciples, whom Jesus loved [whom He esteemed and delighted in], was reclining [next to Him] on Jesus' bosom.

24 So Simon Peter motioned to him to ask of whom He was speaking.

25 Then leaning back against Jesus' breast, he asked Him, Lord, who is it?

26 Jesus answered, It is the one to whom I am going to give this morsel (bit) of food after I have dipped it. So when He had dipped the morsel of bread [into the dish], He gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot's son.

27 Then after [he had taken] the bit of food, Satan entered into *and* took possession of [Judas]. Jesus said to him, What you are going to do, do more swiftly than you seem to intend *and* make quick work of it.

28 But nobody reclining at the table knew why He spoke to him *or* what He meant by telling him this.

29 Some thought that, since Judas had the money box (the purse), Jesus was telling him, Buy what we need for the Festival, or that he should give something to the poor.

30 So after receiving the bit of bread, he went out immediately. And it was night.

31 When he had left, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified! [Now He has achieved His glory, His honor, His exaltation!] And God has been glorified through *and* in Him.

32 And if God is glorified through *and* in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and He will glorify Him at once *and* not delay.

33 [Dear] little children, I am to be with you only a little longer. You will look for Me and, as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: you are not able to come where I am going.

34 I give you a new commandment: that you should love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you too should love one another.

35 By this shall all [men] know that you are My disciples, if you love one another [if you keep on showing love among yourselves].

36 Simon Peter said to Him, Lord, where are You going? Jesus answered, You are not able to follow Me now where I am going, but you shall follow Me afterwards.

37 Peter said to Him, Lord, why cannot I follow You now? I will lay down my life for You.

38 Jesus answered, Will you [really] lay down your life for Me? I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me [completely disown Me] three times.

14

DO NOT let your hearts be troubled (distressed, agitated). You believe in *and* adhere to *and* trust in *and* rely on God; believe in *and* adhere to *and* trust in *and* rely also on Me.

2 In My Father's house there are many dwelling places (homes). If it were not so, I would have told you; for I am going away to prepare a place for you.

3 And when (if) I go and make ready a place for you, I will come back again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.

4 And [to the place] where I am going, you know the way.

5 Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way?

6 Jesus said to him, I am the Way and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by (through) Me.

7 If you had known Me [had learned to recognize Me], you would also have known My Father. From now on, you know Him and have seen Him.

8 Philip said to Him, Lord, show us the Father [cause us to see the Father—that is all we ask]; then we shall be satisfied.

9 Jesus replied, Have I been with all of you for so long a time, and do you not recognize *and* know Me yet, Philip? Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father. How can you say then, Show us the Father?

10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me? What I am telling you I do not say on My own authority *and* of My own accord; but the Father Who lives continually in Me does the (*His*) works (His own miracles, deeds of power).

11 Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me; or else believe Me for the sake of the [very] works themselves. [If you cannot trust Me, at least let these works that I do in My Father's name convince you.]

12 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, if anyone steadfastly believes in Me, he will himself be able to do the things that I do; and he will do even greater things than these, because I go to the Father.

13 And I will do [I Myself will grant] whatever you ask in My Name [as presenting all that I AM], so that the Father may be glorified *and* extolled in (through) the Son.

14 [Yes] I will grant [I Myself will do for you] whatever you shall ask in My Name [as presenting all that I AM].

15 If you [really] love Me, you will keep (obey) My commands.

16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, and Standby), that He may remain with you forever—

17 The Spirit of Truth, Whom the world cannot receive (welcome, take to its heart), because it does not see Him or know *and* recognize Him. But you know *and* recognize Him, for He lives with you [constantly] and will be in you.

18 I will not leave you as orphans [comfortless, desolate, bereaved, forlorn, helpless]; I will come [back] to you.

19 Just a little while now, and the world will not see Me any more, but you will see Me; because I live, you will live also.

20 At that time [when that day comes] you will know [for yourselves] that I am in My Father, and you [are] in Me, and I [am] in you.

21 The person who has My commands and keeps them is the one who [really] loves Me; and whoever [really] loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I [too] will love him and will show (reveal, manifest) Myself to him. [I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.]

22 Judas, not Iscariot, asked Him, Lord, how is it that You will reveal Yourself [make Yourself real] to us and not to the world?

23 Jesus answered, If a person [really] loves Me, he will keep My word [obey My teaching]; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home (abode, special dwelling place) with him.

24 Anyone who does not [really] love Me does not observe *and* obey My teaching. And the teaching which you hear *and* heed is not Mine, but [comes] from the Father Who sent Me.

25 I have told you these things while I am still with you.

26 But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengtheners, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you.

27 Peace I leave with you; My [own] peace I now give *and* bequeath to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [Stop allowing yourselves to be agitated and disturbed; and do not permit yourselves to be fearful and intimidated and cowardly and unsettled.]

28 You heard Me tell you, I am going away and I am coming [back] to you. If you [really] loved Me, you would have been glad, because I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater *and* mightier than I am.

29 And now I have told you [this] before it occurs, so that when it does take place you may believe *and* have faith in *and* rely on Me.

30 I will not talk with you much more, for the prince (evil genius, ruler) of the world is coming. And he has no claim on Me. [He has nothing in common with Me; there is nothing in Me that belongs to him, and he has no power over Me.]

31 But [Satan is coming and] I do as the Father has commanded Me, so that the world may know (be convinced) that I love the Father and that I do only what the Father has instructed Me to do. [I act in full agreement with His orders.] Rise, let us go away from here.

15

I AM the True Vine, and My Father is the Vinedresser.

2 Any branch in Me that does not bear fruit [that stops bearing] He cuts away (trims off, takes away); and He cleanses *and* repeatedly prunes every branch that continues to bear fruit, to make it bear more *and* richer *and* more excellent fruit.

3 You are cleansed *and* pruned already, because of the word which I have given you [the teachings I have discussed with you].

4 Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. [Live in Me, and I will live in you.] Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me.

5 I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing.

6 If a person does not dwell in Me, he is thrown out like a [broken-off] branch, and withers; such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you *and* continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

8 When you bear (produce) much fruit, My Father is honored *and* glorified, and you show *and* prove yourselves to be true followers of Mine.

9 I have loved you, [just] as the Father has loved Me; abide in My love [continue in His love with Me].

10 If you keep My commandments [if you continue to obey My instructions], you will abide in My love *and* live on in it, just as I have obeyed My Father's commandments and live on in His love.

11 I have told you these things, that My joy *and* delight may be in you, and that your joy and gladness may be of full measure *and* complete *and* overflowing.

12 This is My commandment: that you love one another [just] as I have loved you.

13 No one has greater love [no one has shown stronger affection] than to lay down (give up) his own life for his friends.

14 You are My friends if you keep on doing the things which I command you to do.

15 I do not call you servants (slaves) any longer, for the servant does not know what his master is doing (working out). But I have called you My friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father. [I have revealed to you everything that I have learned from Him.]

16 You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed you [I have planted you], that you might go and bear fruit *and* keep on bearing, and that your fruit may be lasting [that it may remain, abide], so that whatever you ask the Father in My Name [as presenting all that I AM], He may give it to you.

17 This is what I command you: that you love one another.

18 If the world hates you, know that it hated Me before it hated you.

19 If you belonged to the world, the world would treat you with affection *and* would love you as its own. But because you are not of the world [no longer one with it], but I have chosen (selected) you out of the world, the world hates (detests) you.

20 Remember that I told you, A servant is not greater than his master [is not superior to him]. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word *and* obeyed My teachings, they will also keep *and* obey yours.

21 But they will do all this to you [inflict all this suffering on you] because of [your bearing] My name *and* on My account, for they do not know *or* understand the One Who sent Me.

22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin [would be blameless]; but now they have no excuse for their sin.

23 Whoever hates Me also hates My Father.

24 If I had not done (accomplished) among them the works which no one else ever did, they would not be guilty of sin. But [the fact is] now they have both seen [these works] and have hated both Me and My Father.

25 But [this is so] that the word written in their Law might be fulfilled, They hated Me without a cause.

26 But when the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby) comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth Who comes (proceeds) from the Father, He [Himself] will testify regarding Me.

27 But you also will testify *and* be My witnesses, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

16

I HAVE told you all these things, so that you should not be offended (taken unawares and falter, or be caused to stumble and fall away). [I told you to keep you from being scandalized and repelled.]

2 They will put you out of (expel you from) the synagogues; but an hour is coming when whoever kills you will think *and* claim that he has offered service to God.

3 And they will do this because they have not known the Father or Me.

4 But I have told you these things now, so that when they occur you will remember that I told you of them. I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you.

5 But now I am going to Him Who sent Me, yet none of you asks Me, Where are You going?

6 But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts [taken complete possession of them].

7 However, I am telling you nothing but the truth when I say it is profitable (good, expedient, advantageous) for you that I go away. Because if I do not go away, the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengtheners, Standby) will not come to you [into close fellowship with you]; but if I go away, I will send Him to you [to be in close fellowship with you].

8 And when He comes, He will convict *and* convince the

world *and* bring demonstration to it about sin and about righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God) and about judgment:

9 About sin, because they do not believe in Me [trust in, rely on, and adhere to Me];

10 About righteousness (uprightness of heart and right standing with God), because I go to My Father, and you will see Me no longer;

11 About judgment, because the ruler (evil genius, prince) of this world [Satan] is judged *and* condemned *and* sentence already is passed upon him.

12 I have still many things to say to you, but you are not able to bear them *or* to take them upon you *or* to grasp them now.

13 But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, He will guide you into all the Truth (the whole, full Truth). For He will not speak His own message [on His own authority]; but He will tell whatever He hears [from the Father; He will give the message that has been given to Him], and He will announce *and* declare to you the things that are to come [that will happen in the future].

14 He will honor *and* glorify Me, because He will take of (receive, draw upon) what is Mine and will reveal (declare, disclose, transmit) it to you.

15 Everything that the Father has is Mine. That is what I meant when I said that He [the Spirit] will take the things that are Mine and will reveal (declare, disclose, transmit) it to you.

16 In a little while you will no longer see Me, and again after a short while you will see Me.

17 So some of His disciples questioned among themselves, What does He mean when He tells us, In a little while you will no longer see Me, and again after a short while you will see Me, and, Because I go to My Father?

18 What does He mean by a little while? We do not know *or* understand what He is talking about.

19 Jesus knew that they wanted to ask Him, so He said to them, Are you wondering *and* inquiring among yourselves what I meant when I said, In a little while you will no longer see Me, and again after a short while you will see Me?

20 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that you shall weep and grieve, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.

21 A woman, when she gives birth to a child, has grief (anguish, agony) because her time has come. But when she has delivered the child, she no longer remembers her pain (trouble, anguish) because she is so glad that a man (a child, a human being) has been born into the world.

22 So for the present you are also in sorrow (in distress and depressed); but I will see you again and [then] your hearts will rejoice, and no one can take from you your joy (gladness, delight).

23 And when that time comes, you will ask nothing of Me [you will need to ask Me no questions]. I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that My Father will grant you whatever you ask in My Name [as presenting all that I AM].

24 Up to this time you have not asked a [single] thing in My Name [as presenting all that I AM]; but now ask *and* keep on asking and you will receive, so that your joy (gladness, delight) may be full *and* complete.

25 I have told you these things in parables (veiled language, allegories, dark sayings); the hour is now coming when I shall no longer speak to you in figures of speech, but I shall tell you about the Father in plain words *and* openly (without reserve).

26 At that time you will ask (pray) in My Name; and I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf [for it will be unnecessary].

27 For the Father Himself [tenderly] loves you because you have loved Me and have believed that I came out from the Father.

28 I came out from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father.

29 His disciples said, Ah, now You are speaking plainly to us and not in parables (veiled language and figures of speech)!

30 Now we know that You are acquainted with everything and have no need to be asked questions. Because of this we believe that you [really] came from God.

31 Jesus answered them, Do you now believe? [Do you believe it at last?]

32 But take notice, the hour is coming, and it has arrived, when you will all be dispersed *and* scattered, every man to his own home, leaving Me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.

33 I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace *and* confidence. In the world you have tribulation *and* trials *and* distress *and* frustration; but be of good cheer [take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted]! For I have overcome the world. [I have deprived it of power to harm you and have conquered it for you.]

17

WHEN JESUS had spoken these things, He lifted up His eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come. Glorify *and* exalt *and* honor *and* magnify Your Son, so that Your Son may glorify *and* extol *and* honor *and* magnify You.

2 [Just as] You have granted Him power *and* authority over all flesh (all humankind), [now glorify Him] so that He may give eternal life to all whom You have given Him.

3 And this is eternal life: [it means] to know (to perceive, recognize, become acquainted with, and understand) You, the only true *and* real God, and [likewise] to know Him, Jesus [as the] Christ (the Anointed One, the Messiah), Whom You have sent.

4 I have glorified You down here on the earth by completing the work that You gave Me to do.

5 And now, Father, glorify Me along with Yourself *and* restore Me to such majesty *and* honor in Your presence as I had with You before the world existed.

6 I have manifested Your Name [I have revealed Your very Self, Your real Self] to the people whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have obeyed *and* kept Your word.

7 Now [at last] they know *and* understand that all You have given Me belongs to You [is really and truly Yours].

8 For the [uttered] words that You gave Me I have given them; and they have received *and* accepted [them] and have come to know positively *and* in reality [to believe with absolute assurance] that I came forth from Your presence, and they have believed *and* are convinced that You did send Me.

9 I am praying for them. I am not praying (requesting) for the world, but for those You have given Me, for they belong to You.

10 All [things that are] Mine are Yours, and all [things that are] Yours belong to Me; and I am glorified in (through) them. [They have done Me honor; in them My glory is achieved.]

11 And [now] I am no more in the world, but these are [still] in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, keep in Your Name [in the knowledge of Yourself] those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We [are one].

12 While I was with them, I kept *and* preserved them in Your Name [in the knowledge and worship of You]. Those You have given Me I guarded *and* protected, and not one of them has perished *or* is lost except the son of perdition [Judas Iscariot—the one who is now doomed to destruction, destined to be lost], that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now I am coming to You; I say these things while I am still in the world, so that My joy may be made full *and* complete *and* perfect in them [that they may experience My delight fulfilled in them, that My enjoyment may be perfected in their own souls, that they may have My gladness within them, filling their hearts].

14 I have given *and* delivered to them Your word (message) and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world [do not belong to the world], just as I am not of the world.

15 I do not ask that You will take them out of the world, but that You will keep *and* protect them from the evil one.

16 They are not of the world (worldly, belonging to the world), [just] as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them [purify, consecrate, separate them for Yourself, make them holy] by the Truth; Your Word is Truth.

18 Just as You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

19 And so for their sake *and* on their behalf I sanctify (dedicate, consecrate) Myself, that they also may be sanctified (dedicated, consecrated, made holy) in the Truth.

20 Neither for these alone do I pray [it is not for their sake only that I make this request], but also for all those who will ever come to believe in (trust in, cling to, rely on) Me through their word *and* teaching,

21 That they all may be one, [just] as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe *and* be convinced that You have sent Me.

22 I have given to them the glory *and* honor which You have given Me, that they may be one [even] as We are one:

23 I in them and You in Me, in order that they may become one *and* perfectly united, that the world may know *and* [definitely] recognize that You sent Me and that You have loved them [even] as You have loved Me.

24 Father, I desire that they also whom You have entrusted to Me [as Your gift to Me] may be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory, which You have given Me [Your love gift to Me]; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

25 O just *and* righteous Father, although the world has not known You *and* has failed to recognize You *and* has never acknowledged You, I have known You [continually]; and these men understand *and* know that You have sent Me.

26 I have made Your Name known to them *and* revealed Your character *and* Your very Self, and I will continue to make [You] known, that the love which You have bestowed upon Me may be in them [felt in their hearts] and that I [Myself] may be in them.

18

HAVING SAID these things, Jesus went out with His disciples beyond (across) the winter torrent of the Kidron [in the ravine]. There was a garden there, which He and His disciples entered.

2 And Judas, who was betraying Him *and* delivering Him up, also knew the place, because Jesus had often retired there with His disciples.

3 So Judas, obtaining *and* taking charge of the band of soldiers and some guards (attendants) of the high priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

4 Then Jesus, knowing all that was about to befall Him, went out to them and said, Whom are you seeking? [Whom do you want?]

5 They answered Him, Jesus the Nazarene. Jesus said to them, I am He. Judas, who was betraying Him, was also standing with them.

6 When Jesus said to them, I am He, they went backwards (drew back, lurched backward) and fell to the ground.

7 Then again He asked them, Whom are you seeking? And they said, Jesus the Nazarene.

8 Jesus answered, I told you that I am He. So, if you want Me [if it is only I for Whom you are looking], let these men go their way.

9 Thus what He had said was fulfilled *and* verified, Of those whom You have given Me, I have not lost even one.

10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

11 Therefore, Jesus said to Peter, Put the sword [back] into the sheath! The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?

12 So the troops and their captain and the guards (attendants) of the Jews seized Jesus and bound Him,

13 And they brought Him first to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year.

14 It was Caiaphas who had counseled the Jews that it was expedient *and* for their welfare that one man should die for (instead of, in behalf of) the people.

15 Now Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. And that disciple was known to the high priest, and so he entered along with Jesus into the court of the palace of the high priest;

16 But Peter was standing outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the maid who kept the door and brought Peter inside.

17 Then the maid who was in charge at the door said to Peter, You are not also one of the disciples of this Man, are you? He said, I am not!

18 Now the servants and the guards (the attendants) had made a fire of coals, for it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. And Peter was with them, standing and warming himself.

19 Then the high priest questioned Jesus about His disciples and about His teaching.

20 Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in a synagogue and in the temple [area], where the Jews [habitually] congregate (assemble); and I have spoken nothing secretly.

21 Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard [Me] what I said to them. See! They know what I said.

22 But when He said this, one of the attendants who stood by struck Jesus, saying, Is that how You answer the high priest?

23 Jesus replied, If I have said anything wrong [if I have spoken abusively, if there was evil in what I said] tell what was wrong with it. But if I spoke rightly *and* properly, why do you strike Me?

24 Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

25 But Simon Peter [still] was standing and was warming himself. They said to him, You are not also one of His disciples, are you? He denied it and said, I am not!

26 One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter cut off, said, Did I not see you in the garden with Him?

27 And again Peter denied it. And immediately a rooster crowed.

28 Then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium (judgment hall, governor's palace). And it was early. They themselves did not enter the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled (become ceremonially unclean), but might be fit to eat the Passover [supper].

29 So Pilate went out to them and said, What accusation do you bring against this Man?

30 They retorted, If He were not an evildoer (criminal), we would not have handed Him over to you.

31 Pilate said to them, Take Him yourselves and judge *and* sentence *and* punish Him according to your [own] law. The Jews answered, It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.

32 This was to fulfill the word which Jesus had spoken to show (indicate, predict) by what manner of death He was to die.

33 So Pilate went back again into the judgment hall and called Jesus and asked Him, Are You the King of the Jews?

34 Jesus replied, Are you saying this of yourself [on your own initiative], or have others told you about Me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Your [own] people *and* nation and their chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom (kingship, royal power) belongs not to this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My followers would have been fighting to keep Me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, My kingdom is not from here (this world); [it has no such origin or source].

37 Pilate said to Him, Then You are a King? Jesus answered, You say it! [You speak correctly!] For I am a King. [Certainly I am a King!] This is why I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the Truth. Everyone who is of the Truth [who is a friend of the Truth, who belongs to the Truth] hears *and* listens to My voice.

38 Pilate said to Him, What is Truth? On saying this he went out to the Jews again and told them, I find no fault in Him.

39 But it is your custom that I release one [prisoner] for you at the Passover. So shall I release for you the King of the Jews?

40 Then they all shouted back again, Not Him [not this Man], but Barabbas! Now Barabbas was a robber.

19

SO THEN Pilate took Jesus and scourged (flogged, whipped) Him.

2 And the soldiers, having twisted together a crown of thorns, put it on His head, and threw a purple cloak around Him.

3 And they kept coming to Him and saying, Hail, King of the Jews! [Good health to you! Peace to you! Long life to you, King of the Jews!] And they struck Him with the palms of their hands.

4 Then Pilate went out again and said to them, See, I bring Him out to you, so that you may know that I find no fault (crime, cause for accusation) in Him.

5 So Jesus came out wearing the thorny crown and purple cloak, and Pilate said to them, See, [here is] the Man!

6 When the chief priests and attendants (guards) saw Him, they cried out, Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Pilate said to them, Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no fault (crime) in Him.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and according to that law He should die, because He has claimed *and* made Himself out to be the Son of God.

8 So, when Pilate heard this said, he was more alarmed *and* awestricken *and* afraid than before.

9 He went into the judgment hall again and said to Jesus, Where are You from? [To what world do You belong?] But Jesus did not answer him.

10 So Pilate said to Him, Will You not speak [even] to me? Do You not know that I have power (authority) to release You and I have power to crucify You?

11 Jesus answered, You would not have any power *or* authority whatsoever against (over) Me if it were not given you from above. For this reason the sin *and* guilt of the one who delivered Me over to you is greater.

12 Upon this, Pilate wanted (sought, was anxious) to release Him, but the Jews kept shrieking, If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar! Anybody who makes himself [out to be] a king sets himself up against Caesar [is a rebel against the emperor]!

13 Hearing this, Pilate brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called the Pavement [the Mosaic Pavement, the Stone Platform]—in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

14 Now it was the day of Preparation for the Passover, and it was about the sixth hour (about twelve o'clock noon). He said to the Jews, See, [here is] your King!

15 But they shouted, Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him! Pilate said to them, Crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar!

16 Then he delivered Him over to them to be crucified.

17 And they took Jesus *and* led [Him] away; so He went out, bearing His own cross, to the spot called The Place of the Skull—in Hebrew it is called Golgotha.

18 There they crucified Him, and with Him two others—one on either side and Jesus between them.

19 And Pilate also wrote a title (an inscription on a placard) and put it on the cross. And the writing was: Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews.

20 And many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, [and] in Greek.

21 Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, Do not write, The King of the Jews, but, He said, I am King of the Jews.

22 Pilate replied, What I have written, I have written.

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, one share for each soldier, and also the tunic (the long shirtlike undergarment). But the tunic was seamless, woven [in one piece] from the top throughout.

24 So they said to one another, Let us not tear it, but let us cast lots to decide whose it shall be. This was to fulfill the Scripture, They parted My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots. So the soldiers did these things.

25 But by the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother's sister, Mary the [wife] of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 So Jesus, seeing His mother there, and the disciple whom He loved standing near, said to His mother, [Dear] woman, See, [here is] your son!

27 Then He said to the disciple, See, [here is] your mother! And from that hour, the disciple took her into his own [keeping, own home].

28 After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished (ended), said in fulfillment of the Scripture, I thirst.

29 A vessel (jar) full of sour wine (vinegar) was placed there, so they put a sponge soaked in the sour wine on [a stalk, reed of] hyssop, and held it to [His] mouth.

30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, It is finished! And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

31 Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from hanging on the cross on the Sabbath—for that Sabbath was a very solemn *and* important one—the Jews requested Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken away.

32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first one, and of the other who had been crucified with Him.

33 But when they came to Jesus and they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came (flowed) out.

35 And he who saw it (the eyewitness) gives this evidence, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he tells the truth, that you may believe also.

36 For these things took place, that the Scripture might be fulfilled (verified, carried out), Not one of His bones shall be broken;

37 And again another Scripture says, They shall look on Him Whom they have pierced.

38 And after this, Joseph of Arimathea—a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews—asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate granted him permission. So he came and took away His body.

39 And Nicodemus also, who first had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, [weighing] about a hundred pounds.

40 So they took Jesus' body and bound it in linen cloths with the spices (aromatics), as is the Jews' customary way to prepare for burial.

41 Now there was a garden in the place where He was crucified, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever [yet] been laid.

42 So there, because of the Jewish day of Preparation [and] since the tomb was near by, they laid Jesus.

20

NOW ON the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been removed from (lifted out of the groove across the entrance of) the tomb.

2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, whom Jesus [tenderly] loved, and said to them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him!

3 Upon this, Peter and the other disciple came out and they went toward the tomb.

4 And they came running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and arrived at the tomb first.

5 And stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not enter.

6 Then Simon Peter came up, following him, and went into the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there;

7 But the burial napkin (kerchief) which had been around Jesus' head, was not lying with the other linen cloths, but was

[still] rolled up (wrapped round and round) in a place by itself.

8 Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, went in too; and he saw and was convinced *and* believed.

9 For as yet they did not know (understand) the statement of Scripture that He must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went back again to their homes (lodging places).

11 But Mary remained standing outside the tomb sobbing. As she wept, she stooped down [and looked] into the tomb.

12 And she saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they said to her, Woman, why are you sobbing? She told them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.

14 On saying this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing [there], but she did not know (recognize) that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you crying [so]? For Whom are you looking? Supposing that it was the gardener, she replied, Sir, if you carried Him away from here, tell me where you have put Him and I will take Him away.

16 Jesus said to her, Mary! Turning around she said to Him in Hebrew, *Rabboni!*—which means Teacher *or* Master.

17 Jesus said to her, Do not cling to Me [do not hold Me], for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to My brethren and tell them, I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.

18 Away came Mary Magdalene, bringing the disciples news (word) that she had seen the Lord and that He had said these things to her.

19 Then on that same first day of the week, when it was evening, though the disciples were behind closed doors for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace to you!

20 So saying, He showed them His hands and His side. And when the disciples saw the Lord, they were filled with joy (delight, exultation, ecstasy, rapture).

21 Then Jesus said to them again, Peace to you! [Just] as the Father has sent Me forth, so I am sending you.

22 And having said this, He breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit!

23 [Now having received the Holy Spirit, and being led and directed by Him] if you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of anyone, they are retained.

24 But Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 So the other disciples kept telling him, We have seen the Lord! But he said to them, Unless I see in His hands the marks made by the nails and put my finger into the nail prints, and put my hand into His side, I will never believe [it].

26 Eight days later His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, though they were behind closed doors, and stood among them and said, Peace to you!

27 Then He said to Thomas, Reach out your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand and place [it] in My side. Do not be faithless *and* incredulous, but [stop your unbelief and] believe!

28 Thomas answered Him, My Lord and my God!

29 Jesus said to him, Because you have seen Me, *Thomas*, do you now believe (trust, have faith)? Blessed *and* happy *and* to be envied are those who have never seen Me and yet have believed *and* adhered to *and* trusted *and* relied on Me.

30 There are also many other signs *and* miracles which Jesus performed in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book.

31 But these are written (recorded) in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ (the Anointed One), the Son of God, and that through believing *and* cleaving to *and* trusting *and* relying upon Him you may have life through (in) His name [through Who He is].

21

AFTER THIS, Jesus let Himself be seen *and* revealed [Himself] again to the disciples, at the Sea of Tiberias. And He did it in this way:

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas, called the Twin, and Nathanael from Cana of Galilee, also the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples.

3 Simon Peter said to them, I am going fishing! They said to him, And we are coming with you! So they went out and got into the boat, and throughout that night they caught nothing.

4 Morning was already breaking when Jesus came to the beach and stood there. However, the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

5 So Jesus said to them, Boys (children), you do not have any meat (fish), do you? [Have you caught anything to eat along with your bread?] They answered Him, No!

6 And He said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find [some]. So they cast the net, and now they were not able to haul it in for such a big catch (mass, quantity) of fish [was in it].

7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord! Simon Peter, hearing him say that it was the Lord, put (girded) on his upper garment (his fisherman's coat, his outer tunic)—for he was stripped [for work]—and sprang into the sea.

8 And the other disciples came in the small boat, for they were not far from shore, only some hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish.

9 When they got out on land (the beach), they saw a fire of coals there and fish lying on it [cooking], and bread.

10 Jesus said to them, Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.

11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net to land, full of large fish, 153 of them; and [though] there were so many of them, the net was not torn.

12 Jesus said to them, Come [and] have breakfast. But none of the disciples ventured *or* dared to ask Him, Who are You? because they [well] knew that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so also [with] the fish.

14 This was now the third time that Jesus revealed Himself (appeared, was manifest) to the disciples after He had risen from the dead.

15 When they had eaten, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these [others do—with reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion, as one loves the Father]? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You [that I have deep, instinctive, personal affection for You, as for a close friend]. He said to him, Feed My lambs.

16 Again He said to him the second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me [with reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion, as one loves the Father]? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You [that I have a deep, instinctive, personal affection for You, as for a close friend]. He said to him, Shepherd (tend) My sheep.

17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me [with a deep, instinctive, personal affection for Me, as for a close friend]? Peter was grieved (was saddened and hurt) that He should ask him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know everything; You know that I love You [that I have a deep, instinctive, personal affection for You, as for a close friend]. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

18 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, when you were young you girded yourself [put on your own belt or girdle] and you walked about wherever you pleased to go. But when you grow old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will put a girdle around you and carry you where you do not wish to go.

19 He said this to indicate by what kind of death Peter would glorify God. And after this, He said to him, Follow Me!

20 But Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved, following—the one who also had leaned back on His breast at the supper and had said, Lord, who is it that is going to betray You?

21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, Lord, what about this man?

22 Jesus said to him, If I want him to stay (survive, live) until I come, what is that to you? [What concern is it of yours?] You follow Me!

23 So word went out among the brethren that this disciple was not going to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not going to die, but, If I want him to stay (survive, live) till I come, what is that to you?

24 It is this same disciple who is bearing witness to these things and who has recorded (written) them; and we [well] know that his testimony is true.

25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did. If they should be all recorded one by one [in detail], I suppose that even the world itself could not contain (have room for) the books that would be written.