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| **SELECTED PORTIONS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT** | | |
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**SELECTED PORTIONS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT**

**1] JOHN, THE BAPTIST**

**Luke 3:1-20**

The Message (MSG)

**A Baptism of Life-Change**

3**1-6**In the fifteenth year of the rule of Caesar Tiberius—it was while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; Herod, ruler of Galilee; his brother Philip, ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis; Lysanias, ruler of Abilene; during the Chief-Priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—John, Zachariah’s son, out in the desert at the time, received a message from God. He went all through the country around the Jordan River preaching a baptism of life-change leading to forgiveness of sins, as described in the words of Isaiah the prophet:

Thunder in the desert!  
“Prepare God’s arrival!  
Make the road smooth and straight!  
Every ditch will be filled in,  
Every bump smoothed out,  
The detours straightened out,  
All the ruts paved over.  
Everyone will be there to see  
The parade of God’s salvation.”

**7-9**When crowds of people came out for baptism because it was the popular thing to do, John exploded: “Brood of snakes! What do you think you’re doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snake skins is going to deflect God’s judgment? It’s your *life* that must change, not your skin. And don’t think you can pull rank by claiming Abraham as ‘father.’ Being a child of Abraham is neither here nor there—children of Abraham are a dime a dozen. God can make children from stones if he wants. What counts is your life. Is it green and blossoming? Because if it’s deadwood, it goes on the fire.”

**10**The crowd asked him, “Then what are we supposed to do?”

**11**“If you have two coats, give one away,” he said. “Do the same with your food.”

**12**Tax men also came to be baptized and said, “Teacher, what should we do?”

**13**He told them, “No more extortion—collect only what is required by law.”

**14**Soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?”

He told them, “No shakedowns, no blackmail—and be content with your rations.”

**15**The interest of the people by now was building. They were all beginning to wonder, “Could this John be the Messiah?”

**16-17**But John intervened: “I’m baptizing you here in the river. The main character in this drama, to whom I’m a mere stagehand, will ignite the kingdom life, a fire, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He’s going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He’ll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he’ll put out with the trash to be burned.”

**18-20**There was a lot more of this—words that gave strength to the people, words that put heart in them. The Message! But Herod, the ruler, stung by John’s rebuke in the matter of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, capped his long string of evil deeds with this outrage: He put John in jail.

**John 1:15-34**

**15**John pointed him out and called, “This is the One! The One I told you was coming after me but in fact was ahead of me. He has always been ahead of me, has always had the first word.”

**16-18**We all live off his generous bounty,  
        gift after gift after gift.  
    We got the basics from Moses,  
        and then this exuberant giving and receiving,  
    This endless knowing and understanding—  
        all this came through Jesus, the Messiah.  
    No one has ever seen God,  
        not so much as a glimpse.  
    This one-of-a-kind God-Expression,  
        who exists at the very heart of the Father,  
        has made him plain as day.

**Thunder in the Desert**

**19-20**When Jews from Jerusalem sent a group of priests and officials to ask John who he was, he was completely honest. He didn’t evade the question. He told the plain truth: “I am not the Messiah.”

**21**They pressed him, “Who, then? Elijah?”

“I am not.”

“The Prophet?”

“No.”

**22**Exasperated, they said, “Who, then? We need an answer for those who sent us. Tell us something—anything!—about yourself.”

**23**“I’m thunder in the desert: ‘Make the road straight for God!’ I’m doing what the prophet Isaiah preached.”

**24-25**Those sent to question him were from the Pharisee party. Now they had a question of their own: “If you’re neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet, why do you baptize?”

**26-27**John answered, “I only baptize using water. A person you don’t recognize has taken his stand in your midst. He comes after me, but he is not in second place to me. I’m not even worthy to hold his coat for him.”

**28**These conversations took place in Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing at the time.

**The God-Revealer**

**29-31**The very next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and yelled out, “Here he is, God’s Passover Lamb! He forgives the sins of the world! This is the man I’ve been talking about, ‘the One who comes after me but is really ahead of me.’ I knew nothing about who he was—only this: that my task has been to get Israel ready to recognize him as the God-Revealer. That is why I came here baptizing with water, giving you a good bath and scrubbing sins from your life so you can get a fresh start with God.”

**32-34**John clinched his witness with this: “I watched the Spirit, like a dove flying down out of the sky, making himself at home in him. I repeat, I know nothing about him except this: The One who authorized me to baptize with water told me, ‘The One on whom you see the Spirit come down and stay, this One will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ That’s exactly what I saw happen, and I’m telling you, there’s no question about it: *This* is the Son of God.”

### Matthew 14:3-12

**3-5**Herod had arrested John, put him in chains, and sent him to prison to placate Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife. John had provoked Herod by naming his relationship with Herodias “adultery.” Herod wanted to kill him, but he was afraid because so many people revered John as a prophet of God.

**6-12**But at his birthday celebration, he got his chance. Herodias’s daughter provided the entertainment, dancing for the guests. She swept Herod away. In his drunken enthusiasm, he promised her on oath anything she wanted. Already coached by her mother, she was ready: “Give me, served up on a platter, the head of John the Baptizer.” That sobered the king up fast. Unwilling to lose face with his guests, he did it—ordered John’s head cut off and presented to the girl on a platter. She in turn gave it to her mother. Later, John’s disciples got the body, gave it a reverent burial, and reported to Jesus.

[***The Message***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/)***(MSG)***

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**2] STEPHEN, A MAN FULL OF FAITH AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**Acts 6 & 7**

New International Version (NIV)

6In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. **2**So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. **3**Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them **4**and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.”

**5**This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. **6**They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

**7**So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

**Stephen Seized**

**8**Now Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people.**9**Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. **10**But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

**11**Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God.”

**12**So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. **13**They produced false witnesses, who testified, “This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. **14**For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us.”

**15**All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

**Stephen’s Speech to the Sanhedrin**

7Then the high priest asked Stephen, “Are these charges true?”

**2**To this he replied: “Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran. **3**‘Leave your country and your people,’ God said, ‘and go to the land I will show you.’

**4**“So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Harran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living. **5**He gave him no inheritance here, not even enough ground to set his foot on. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child. **6**God spoke to him in this way: ‘For four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated. **7**But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,’ God said, ‘and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.’**8**Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

**9**“Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him **10**and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt. So Pharaoh made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.

**11**“Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our ancestors could not find food. **12**When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our forefathers on their first visit. **13**On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph’s family. **14**After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all. **15**Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our ancestors died. **16**Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money.

**17**“As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt had greatly increased. **18**Then ‘a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.’ **19**He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our ancestors by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies so that they would die.

**20**“At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for by his family.**21**When he was placed outside, Pharaoh’s daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. **22**Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

**23**“When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. **24**He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. **25**Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. **26**The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, ‘Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?’

**27**“But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, ‘Who made you ruler and judge over us?**28**Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?’ **29**When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

**30**“After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. **31**When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to get a closer look, he heard the Lord say: **32**‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.’ Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.

**33**“Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. **34**I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.’

**35**“This is the same Moses they had rejected with the words, ‘Who made you ruler and judge?’ He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. **36**He led them out of Egypt and performed wonders and signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the wilderness.

**37**“This is the Moses who told the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your own people.’ **38**He was in the assembly in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living words to pass on to us.

**39**“But our ancestors refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. **40**They told Aaron, ‘Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we don’t know what has happened to him!’ **41**That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and reveled in what their own hands had made. **42**But God turned away from them and gave them over to the worship of the sun, moon and stars. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets:

“‘Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings  
    forty years in the wilderness, people of Israel?  
**43**You have taken up the tabernacle of Molek  
    and the star of your god Rephan,  
    the idols you made to worship.  
Therefore I will send you into exile’ beyond Babylon.

**44**“Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the covenant law with them in the wilderness. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. **45**After receiving the tabernacle, our ancestors under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, **46**who enjoyed God’s favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. **47**But it was Solomon who built a house for him.

**48**“However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says:

**49**“‘Heaven is my throne,  
    and the earth is my footstool.  
What kind of house will you build for me?  
says the Lord.  
    Or where will my resting place be?  
**50**Has not my hand made all these things?’

**51**“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! **52**Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— **53**you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

**The Stoning of Stephen**

**54**When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. **55**But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. **56**“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

**57**At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, **58**dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

**59**While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” **60**Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

[***New International Version***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-International-Version-NIV-Bible/)***(NIV)***

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**3] SAUL WHO BECAME THE GREAT APOSTLE**

**Acts 9:1-31**

The Message (MSG)

**The Blinding of Saul**

9**1-2**All this time Saul was breathing down the necks of the Master’s disciples, out for the kill. He went to the Chief Priest and got arrest warrants to take to the meeting places in Damascus so that if he found anyone there belonging to the Way, whether men or women, he could arrest them and bring them to Jerusalem.

**3-4**He set off. When he got to the outskirts of Damascus, he was suddenly dazed by a blinding flash of light. As he fell to the ground, he heard a voice: “Saul, Saul, why are you out to get me?”

**5-6**He said, “Who are you, Master?”

“I am Jesus, the One you’re hunting down. I want you to get up and enter the city. In the city you’ll be told what to do next.”

**7-9**His companions stood there dumbstruck—they could hear the sound, but couldn’t see anyone—while Saul, picking himself up off the ground, found himself stone-blind. They had to take him by the hand and lead him into Damascus. He continued blind for three days. He ate nothing, drank nothing.

**10**There was a disciple in Damascus by the name of Ananias. The Master spoke to him in a vision: “Ananias.”

“Yes, Master?” he answered.

**11-12**“Get up and go over to Straight Avenue. Ask at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus. His name is Saul. He’s there praying. He has just had a dream in which he saw a man named Ananias enter the house and lay hands on him so he could see again.”

**13-14**Ananias protested, “Master, you can’t be serious. Everybody’s talking about this man and the terrible things he’s been doing, his reign of terror against your people in Jerusalem! And now he’s shown up here with papers from the Chief Priest that give him license to do the same to us.”

**15-16**But the Master said, “Don’t argue. Go! I have picked him as my personal representative to non-Jews and kings and Jews. And now I’m about to show him what he’s in for—the hard suffering that goes with this job.”

**17-19**So Ananias went and found the house, placed his hands on blind Saul, and said, “Brother Saul, the Master sent me, the same Jesus you saw on your way here. He sent me so you could see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” No sooner were the words out of his mouth than something like scales fell from Saul’s eyes—he could see again! He got to his feet, was baptized, and sat down with them to a hearty meal.

**Plots Against Saul**

**19-21**Saul spent a few days getting acquainted with the Damascus disciples, but then went right to work, wasting no time, preaching in the meeting places that this Jesus was the Son of God. They were caught off guard by this and, not at all sure they could trust him, they kept saying, “Isn’t this the man who wreaked havoc in Jerusalem among the believers? And didn’t he come here to do the same thing—arrest us and drag us off to jail in Jerusalem for sentencing by the high priests?”

**22**But their suspicions didn’t slow Saul down for even a minute. His momentum was up now and he plowed straight into the opposition, disarming the Damascus Jews and trying to show them that this Jesus was the Messiah.

**23-25**After this had gone on quite a long time, some Jews conspired to kill him, but Saul got wind of it. They were watching the city gates around the clock so they could kill him. Then one night the disciples engineered his escape by lowering him over the wall in a basket.

**26-27**Back in Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him. They didn’t trust him one bit. Then Barnabas took him under his wing. He introduced him to the apostles and stood up for him, told them how Saul had seen and spoken to the Master on the Damascus Road and how in Damascus itself he had laid his life on the line with his bold preaching in Jesus’ name.

**28-30**After that he was accepted as one of them, going in and out of Jerusalem with no questions asked, uninhibited as he preached in the Master’s name. But then he ran afoul of a group called Hellenists—he had been engaged in a running argument with them—who plotted his murder. When his friends learned of the plot, they got him out of town, took him to Caesarea, and then shipped him off to Tarsus.

**31**Things calmed down after that and the church had smooth sailing for a while. All over the country—Judea, Samaria, Galilee—the church grew. They were permeated with a deep sense of reverence for God. The Holy Spirit was with them, strengthening them. They prospered wonderfully.

[***The Message***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/)***(MSG)***

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**4] CORNELIUS, A DEVOUT AND GOD-FEARING CENTURION**

**Acts 10**

New International Version (NIV)

**Cornelius Calls for Peter**

10At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. **2**He and all his family were devout and God-fearing;  he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.**3**One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, “Cornelius!”

**4**Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked.

The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. **5**Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. **6**He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.”

**7**When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. **8**He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

**Peter’s Vision**

**9**About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray.**10**He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. **11**He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. **12**It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. **13**Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

**14**“Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

**15**The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

**16**This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

**17**While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon’s house was and stopped at the gate. **18**They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

**19**While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. **20**So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”

**21**Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?”

**22**The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” **23**Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

**Peter at Cornelius’s House**

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. **24**The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. **25**As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. **26**But Peter made him get up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.”

**27**While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. **28**He said to them: “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. **29**So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?”

**30**Cornelius answered: “Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me **31**and said, ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. **32**Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.’ **33**So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

**34**Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism **35**but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. **36**You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. **37**You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— **38**how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

**39**“We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, **40**but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. **41**He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.**42**He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. **43**All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

**44**While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. **45**The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles.**46**For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, **47**“Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” **48**So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

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### 5] WHO IS THE GREASTEST?

### Mark 9:33-37

New International Version (NIV)

9 **33**They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?”**34**But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.

**35**Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

**36**He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, **37**“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

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### 6] WHOEVER IS NOT AGAINST US IS FOR US

### Mark 9:38-41

New International Version (NIV)

9 **38**“Teacher,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”

**39**“Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, **40**for whoever is not against us is for us. **41**Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

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**7] CAUSING TO STUMBLE**

**Mark 9:42-50**

New International Version (NIV)

**42**“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. **43**If your hand causes you to stumble,cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. **[44] 45**And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. **[46]** **47**And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, **48**where

“‘the worms that eat them do not die,  
    and the fire is not quenched.’

**49**Everyone will be salted with fire.

**50**“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”

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**8] THE LITTLE CHILDREN AND JESUS**

**Mark 10:13-16**

New International Version (NIV)

**13**People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them.**14**When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. **15**Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” **16**And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

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**9] TO ENTER GOD’S KINGDOM**

**Mark 10:17-27**

The Message (MSG)

**17**As he went out into the street, a man came running up, greeted him with great reverence, and asked, “Good Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?”

**18-19**Jesus said, “Why are you calling me good? No one is good, only God. You know the commandments: Don’t murder, don’t commit adultery, don’t steal, don’t lie, don’t cheat, honor your father and mother.”

**20**He said, “Teacher, I have—from my youth—kept them all!”

**21**Jesus looked him hard in the eye—and loved him! He said, “There’s one thing left: Go sell whatever you own and give it to the poor. All your wealth will then be heavenly wealth. And come follow me.”

**22**The man’s face clouded over. This was the last thing he expected to hear, and he walked off with a heavy heart. He was holding on tight to a lot of things, and not about to let go.

**23-25**Looking at his disciples, Jesus said, “Do you have any idea how difficult it is for people who ‘have it all’ to enter God’s kingdom?” The disciples couldn’t believe what they were hearing, but Jesus kept on: “You can’t imagine how difficult. I’d say it’s easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye than for the rich to get into God’s kingdom.”

**26***That* set the disciples back on their heels. “Then who has any chance at all?” they asked.

**27**Jesus was blunt: “No chance at all if you think you can pull it off by yourself. Every chance in the world if you let God do it.”

[***The Message***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/)***(MSG)***

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**10] THE HIGHEST PLACES OF HONOR**

**Mark 10:35-45**

The Message (MSG)

**35**James and John, Zebedee’s sons, came up to him. “Teacher, we have something we want you to do for us.”

**36**“What is it? I’ll see what I can do.”

**37**“Arrange it,” they said, “so that we will be awarded the highest places of honor in your glory—one of us at your right, the other at your left.”

**38**Jesus said, “You have no idea what you’re asking. Are you capable of drinking the cup I drink, of being baptized in the baptism I’m about to be plunged into?”

**39-40**“Sure,” they said. “Why not?”

Jesus said, “Come to think of it, you *will* drink the cup I drink, and be baptized in my baptism. But as to awarding places of honor, that’s not my business. There are other arrangements for that.”

**41-45**When the other ten heard of this conversation, they lost their tempers with James and John. Jesus got them together to settle things down. “You’ve observed how godless rulers throw their weight around,” he said, “and when people get a little power how quickly it goes to their heads. It’s not going to be that way with you. Whoever wants to be great must become a servant. Whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. That is what the Son of Man has done: He came to serve, not to be served—and then to give away his life in exchange for many who are held hostage.”

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**11] PAYING THE IMPERIAL TAX TO CAESAR**

**Mark 12:13-17**

New International Version (NIV)

**13**Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. **14**They came to him and said, “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?**15**Should we pay or shouldn’t we?”

But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. “Why are you trying to trap me?” he asked. “Bring me a denarius and let me look at it.”**16**They brought the coin, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

“Caesar’s,” they replied.

**17**Then Jesus said to them, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”

And they were amazed at him.

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**12] THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT**

**Mark 12:28-34**

New International Version (NIV)

**28**One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

**29**“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **30**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ **31**The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

**32**“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. **33**To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

**34**When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

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**13] REPENT OR PERISH**

**Luke 13:1-9**

New International Version (NIV)

13Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. **2**Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? **3**I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. **4**Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? **5**I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

**6**Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. **7**So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’

**8**“‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. **9**If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’”

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**14] SIN, FAITH, DUTY**

**Luke 17:1-10**

New International Version (NIV)

17Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. **2**It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. **3**So watch yourselves.

“If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. **4**Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

**5**The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”

**6**He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed,you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.

**7**“Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? **8**Won’t he rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’?**9**Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? **10**So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”

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### 15] LOVE IS THE GREATEST

### 1 Corinthians 13

New Living Translation (NLT)

13If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn’t love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. **2**If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God’s secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn’t love others, I would be nothing. **3**If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn’t love others, I would have gained nothing.

**4**Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud **5**or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. **6**It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. **7**Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

**8**Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever!**9**Now our knowledge is partial and incomplete, and even the gift of prophecy reveals only part of the whole picture! **10**But when the time of perfection comes, these partial things will become useless.

**11**When I was a child, I spoke and thought and reasoned as a child. But when I grew up, I put away childish things. **12**Now we see things imperfectly, like puzzling reflections in a mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely.

**13**Three things will last forever—faith, hope, and love—and the greatest of these is love.

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**16] DO TO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM DO TO YOU**

**Luke 6:31-34**

New International Version (NIV)

**31**Do to others as you would have them do to you.

**32**“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you?Even sinners love those who love them. **33**And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. **34**And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full.

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**17] THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS**

**Matthew 25:31-46**

The Message (MSG)

**31-33**“When he finally arrives, blazing in beauty and all his angels with him, the Son of Man will take his place on his glorious throne. Then all the nations will be arranged before him and he will sort the people out, much as a shepherd sorts out sheep and goats, putting sheep to his right and goats to his left.

**34-36**“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what’s coming to you in this kingdom. It’s been ready for you since the world’s foundation. And here’s why:

I was hungry and you fed me,  
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,  
I was homeless and you gave me a room,  
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,  
I was sick and you stopped to visit,  
I was in prison and you came to me.’

**37-40**“Then those ‘sheep’ are going to say, ‘Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and give you a drink? And when did we ever see you sick or in prison and come to you?’ Then the King will say, ‘I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you did one of these things to someone overlooked or ignored, that was me—you did it to me.’

**41-43**“Then he will turn to the ‘goats,’ the ones on his left, and say, ‘Get out, worthless goats! You’re good for nothing but the fires of hell. And why? Because—

I was hungry and you gave me no meal,  
I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,  
I was homeless and you gave me no bed,  
I was shivering and you gave me no clothes,  
Sick and in prison, and you never visited.’

**44**“Then those ‘goats’ are going to say, ‘Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or homeless or shivering or sick or in prison and didn’t help?’

**45**“He will answer them, ‘I’m telling the solemn truth: Whenever you failed to do one of these things to someone who was being overlooked or ignored, that was me—you failed to do it to me.’

**46**“Then those ‘goats’ will be herded to their eternal doom, but the ‘sheep’ to their eternal reward.”

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\*\*\*\*\*18] **JOY LIKE A RIVER OVERFLOWING**

**John 16:17-33**

The Message (MSG)

**17-18**That stirred up a hornet’s nest of questions among the disciples: “What’s he talking about: ‘In a day or so you’re not going to see me, but then in another day or so you will see me’? And, ‘Because I’m on my way to the Father’? What is this ‘day or so’? We don’t know what he’s talking about.”

**19-20**Jesus knew they were dying to ask him what he meant, so he said, “Are you trying to figure out among yourselves what I meant when I said, ‘In a day or so you’re not going to see me, but then in another day or so you will see me’? Then fix this firmly in your minds: You’re going to be in deep mourning while the godless world throws a party. You’ll be sad, very sad, but your sadness will develop into gladness.

**21-23**“When a woman gives birth, she has a hard time, there’s no getting around it. But when the baby is born, there is joy in the birth. This new life in the world wipes out memory of the pain. The sadness you have right now is similar to that pain, but the coming joy is also similar. When I see you again, you’ll be full of joy, and it will be a joy no one can rob from you. You’ll no longer be so full of questions.

**23-24**“This is what I want you to do: Ask the Father for whatever is in keeping with the things I’ve revealed to you. Ask in my name, according to my will, and he’ll most certainly give it to you. Your joy will be a river overflowing its banks!

**25-28**“I’ve used figures of speech in telling you these things. Soon I’ll drop the figures and tell you about the Father in plain language. Then you can make your requests directly to him in relation to this life I’ve revealed to you. I won’t continue making requests of the Father on your behalf. I won’t need to. Because you’ve gone out on a limb, committed yourselves to love and trust in me, believing I came directly from the Father, the Father loves you directly. First, I left the Father and arrived in the world; now I leave the world and travel to the Father.”

**29-30**His disciples said, “Finally! You’re giving it to us straight, in plain talk—no more figures of speech. Now we know that you know everything—it all comes together in you. You won’t have to put up with our questions anymore. We’re convinced you came from God.”

**31-33**Jesus answered them, “Do you finally believe? In fact, you’re about to make a run for it—saving your own skins and abandoning me. But I’m not abandoned. The Father is with me. I’ve told you all this so that trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless world you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I’ve conquered the world.”

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### Matthew 17:1-13

New International Version (NIV)

17After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. **2**There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. **3**Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

**4**Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.”

**5**While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”

**6**When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. **7**But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.” **8**When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

**9**As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, “Don’t tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

**10**The disciples asked him, “Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?”

**11**Jesus replied, “To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. **12**But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.” **13**Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist.

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**20] JESUS’ PRAYER FOR HIS FOLLOWERS**

**John 17**

The Message (MSG)

17**1-5**Jesus said these things. Then, raising his eyes in prayer, he said:

Father, it’s time.  
Display the bright splendor of your Son  
So the Son in turn may show your bright splendor.  
You put him in charge of everything human  
So he might give real and eternal life to all in his charge.  
And this is the real and eternal life:  
That they know you,  
The one and only true God,  
And Jesus Christ, whom you sent.  
I glorified you on earth  
By completing down to the last detail  
What you assigned me to do.  
And now, Father, glorify me with your very own splendor,  
The very splendor I had in your presence  
Before there was a world.

**6-12**I spelled out your character in detail  
To the men and women you gave me.  
They were yours in the first place;  
Then you gave them to me,  
And they have now done what you said.  
They know now, beyond the shadow of a doubt,  
That everything you gave me is firsthand from you,  
For the message you gave me, I gave them;  
And they took it, and were convinced  
That I came from you.  
They believed that you sent me.  
I pray for them.  
I’m not praying for the God-rejecting world  
But for those you gave me,  
For they are yours by right.  
Everything mine is yours, and yours mine,  
And my life is on display in them.  
For I’m no longer going to be visible in the world;  
They’ll continue in the world  
While I return to you.  
Holy Father, guard them as they pursue this life  
That you conferred as a gift through me,  
So they can be one heart and mind  
As we are one heart and mind.  
As long as I was with them, I guarded them  
In the pursuit of the life you gave through me;  
I even posted a night watch.  
And not one of them got away,  
Except for the rebel bent on destruction  
(the exception that proved the rule of Scripture).

**13-19**Now I’m returning to you.  
I’m saying these things in the world’s hearing  
So my people can experience  
My joy completed in them.  
I gave them your word;  
The godless world hated them because of it,  
Because they didn’t join the world’s ways,  
Just as I didn’t join the world’s ways.  
I’m not asking that you take them out of the world  
But that you guard them from the Evil One.  
They are no more defined by the world  
Than I am defined by the world.  
Make them holy—consecrated—with the truth;  
Your word is consecrating truth.  
In the same way that you gave me a mission in the world,  
I give them a mission in the world.  
I’m consecrating myself for their sakes  
So they’ll be truth-consecrated in their mission.

**20-23**I’m praying not only for them  
But also for those who will believe in me  
Because of them and their witness about me.  
The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind—  
Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you,  
So they might be one heart and mind with us.  
Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me.  
The same glory you gave me, I gave them,  
So they’ll be as unified and together as we are—  
I in them and you in me.  
Then they’ll be mature in this oneness,  
And give the godless world evidence  
That you’ve sent me and loved them  
In the same way you’ve loved me.

**24-26**Father, I want those you gave me  
To be with me, right where I am,  
So they can see my glory, the splendor you gave me,  
Having loved me  
Long before there ever was a world.  
Righteous Father, the world has never known you,  
But I have known you, and these disciples know  
That you sent me on this mission.  
I have made your very being known to them—  
Who you are and what you do—  
And continue to make it known,  
So that your love for me  
Might be in them  
Exactly as I am in them.

[***The Message***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/)***(MSG)***

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**21] THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE**

**AND SIGNS OF THE END TIMES**

**Matthew 24:1-35**

New International Version (NIV)

24Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings.**2**“Do you see all these things?” he asked. “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

**3**As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

**4**Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. **5**For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. **6**You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. **7**Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be faminesand earthquakes in various places. **8**All these are the beginning of birth pains.

**9**“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.**10**At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, **11**and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. **12**Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, **13**but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. **14**And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

**15**“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— **16**then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. **17**Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. **18**Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. **19**How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! **20**Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. **21**For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.

**22**“If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. **23**At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. **24**For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.**25**See, I have told you ahead of time.

**26**“So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the wilderness,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. **27**For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. **28**Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

**29**“Immediately after the distress of those days

“‘the sun will be darkened,  
    and the moon will not give its light;  
the stars will fall from the sky,  
    and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’

**30**“Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. **31**And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

**32**“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. **33**Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. **34**Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. **35**Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

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**22] THE DAY AND HOUR UNKNOWN**

**Matthew 24:36-51**

New International Version (NIV)

**36**“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. **37**As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. **38**For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; **39**and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. **40**Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. **41**Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

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

**45**“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? **46**It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. **47**Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. **48**But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ **49**and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. **50**The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. **51**He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

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**23] JESUS COMFORTS HIS DISCIPLES**

**John 14**

New International Version (NIV)

14“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. **2**My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going thereto prepare a place for you? **3**And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. **4**You know the way to the place where I am going.”

**Jesus the Way to the Father**

**5**Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

**6**Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life.No one comes to the Father except through me. **7**If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

**8**Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

**9**Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? **10**Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. **11**Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. **12**Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing,and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. **13**And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **14**You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

**Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit**

**15**“If you love me, keep my commands. **16**And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— **17**the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. **18**I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. **19**Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me.Because I live, you also will live. **20**On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. **21**Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

**22**Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

**23**Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. **24**Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

**25**“All this I have spoken while still with you. **26**But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. **27**Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

**28**“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. **29**I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. **30**I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, **31**but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

“Come now; let us leave.’’

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**24] JESUS THE BREAD OF LIFE**

**John 6:22-71**

New International Version (NIV)

**22**The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. **23**Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. **24**Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

**25**When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

**26**Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. **27**Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

**28**Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

**29**Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

**30**So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? **31**Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

**32**Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. **33**For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

**34**“Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

**35**Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. **36**But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. **37**All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. **38**For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. **39**And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.**40**For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Sonand believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

**41**At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”**42**They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

**43**“Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered.**44**“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. **45**It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God. ’Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. **46**No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. **47**Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. **48**I am the bread of life. **49**Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. **50**But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. **51**I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

**52**Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

**53**Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. **54**Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. **55**For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. **56**Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them.**57**Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.**58**This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.” **59**He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

**60**On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”

**61**Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, “Does this offend you? **62**Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! **63**The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life. **64**Yet there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. **65**He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.”

**66**From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

**67**“You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the Twelve.

**68**Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. **69**We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

**70**Then Jesus replied, “Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!” **71**(He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

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**25] JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD**

**John 8:12-30**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**12**Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.” **13**So the Pharisees said to Him, “You are testifying about Yourself; Your testimony is nottrue.” **14**Jesus answered and said to them, “Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true, 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 judge according to the flesh; I am not judging anyone. **16**But even if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone *in it*, but I and the Father who sent Me. **17**Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. **18**I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.” **19**So they were saying to Him, “Where is Your Father?” Jesus answered, “You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also.”**20**These words He spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come.

**21**Then He said again to them, “I go away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come.” **22**So the Jews were saying, “Surely He will not kill Himself, will He, since He says, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come’?” **23**And He was saying to them, “You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. **24**Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins.” **25**So they were saying to Him, “Who are You?” Jesus said to them, “What have I been saying to you *from* the beginning? **26**I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world.” **27**They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father. **28**So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.**29**And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.” **30**As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

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**26] THE TRUTH WILL MAKE YOU FREE**

**John 8:31-59**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**31**So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him,“If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; **32**and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” **33**They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You will become free’?”

**34**Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. **35**The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever.**36**So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. **37**I know that you are Abraham’s descendants; yet you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. **38**I speak the things which I have seen with *My* Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from *your* father.”

**39**They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus \*said to them, “If you are Abraham’s children, do the deeds of Abraham. **40**But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. **41**You are doing the deeds of your father.” They said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God.” **42**Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. **43**Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is* because you cannot hear My word.**44**You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies. **45**But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. **46**Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? **47**He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God.”

**48**The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?” **49**Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. **50**But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. **51**Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” **52**The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets *also*; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’ **53**Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out *to be*?” **54**Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’;**55**and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. **56**Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.” **57**So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” **58**Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” **59**Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

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**27] THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP**

**John 10:1-21**

New International Version (NIV)

10“Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. **2**The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. **3**The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4**When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. **5**But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” **6**Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

**7**Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. **8**All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them.**9**I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. **10**The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

**11**“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. **12**The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. **13**The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

**14**“I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— **15**just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. **16**I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. **17**The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. **18**No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

**19**The Jews who heard these words were again divided.**20**Many of them said, “He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?”

**21**But others said, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”

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**28] THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES AT PENTECOST**

**Acts 2**

New International Version (NIV)

2When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. **2**Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. **3**They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. **4**All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

**5**Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. **6**When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. **7**Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans?**8**Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? **9**Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,**10**Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome **11**(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” **12**Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

**13**Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

**Peter Addresses the Crowd**

**14**Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. **15**These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! **16**No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

**17**“‘In the last days, God says,  
    I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
    your young men will see visions,  
    your old men will dream dreams.  
**18**Even on my servants, both men and women,  
    I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
    and they will prophesy.  
**19**I will show wonders in the heavens above  
    and signs on the earth below,  
    blood and fire and billows of smoke.  
**20**The sun will be turned to darkness  
    and the moon to blood  
    before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.  
**21**And everyone who calls  
    on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

**22**“Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs,which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. **23**This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.**24**But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. **25**David said about him:

“‘I saw the Lord always before me.  
    Because he is at my right hand,  
    I will not be shaken.  
**26**Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;  
    my body also will rest in hope,  
**27**because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,  
    you will not let your holy one see decay.  
**28**You have made known to me the paths of life;  
    you will fill me with joy in your presence.’

**29**“Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. **30**But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. **31**Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. **32**God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. **33**Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. **34**For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“‘The Lord said to my Lord:  
    “Sit at my right hand  
**35**until I make your enemies  
    a footstool for your feet.”’

**36**“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

**37**When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

**38**Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39**The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

**40**With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”**41**Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

**The Fellowship of the Believers**

**42**They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.**43**Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. **44**All the believers were together and had everything in common. **45**They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. **46**Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, **47**praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

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**29] THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM**

**Acts 15:1-35**

New International Version (NIV)

15Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” **2**This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. **3**The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. **4**When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

**5**Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”

**6**The apostles and elders met to consider this question.**7**After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. **8**God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. **9**He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.**10**Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? **11**No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”

**12**The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. **13**When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me.**14**Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. **15**The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

**16**“‘After this I will return  
    and rebuild David’s fallen tent.  
Its ruins I will rebuild,  
    and I will restore it,  
**17**that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,  
    even all the Gentiles who bear my name,  
says the Lord, who does these things’—  
**18**    things known from long ago.

**19**“It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. **20**Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. **21**For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

**The Council’s Letter to Gentile Believers**

**22**Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers. **23**With them they sent the following letter:

*The apostles and elders, your brothers,*

*To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:*

*Greetings.*

***24****We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said.****25****So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul—****26****men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.****27****Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing.****28****It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:****29****You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.*

*Farewell.*

**30**So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter.**31**The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. **32**Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. **33**After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. **[34]** **35**But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

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**30] PAUL SAILS FOR ROME**

**Acts 27 & 28**

New International Version (NIV)

27When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. **2**We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

**3**The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs. **4**From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. **5**When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. **6**There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. **7**We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. **8**We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.

**9**Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Day of Atonement. So Paul warned them, **10**“Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also.” **11**But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. **12**Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.

**The Storm**

**13**When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. **14**Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island. **15**The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. **16**As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure, **17**so the men hoisted it aboard. Then they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Because they were afraid they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along. **18**We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. **19**On the third day, they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands. **20**When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

**21**After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: “Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. **22**But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. **23**Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me**24**and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.’ **25**So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.**26**Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island.”

**The Shipwreck**

**27**On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. **28**They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feetdeep. **29**Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. **30**In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. **31**Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.” **32**So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away.

**33**Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. “For the last fourteen days,” he said, “you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven’t eaten anything.**34**Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head.” **35**After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. **36**They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.**37**Altogether there were 276 of us on board. **38**When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

**39**When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. **40**Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. **41**But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.

**42**The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. **43**But the centurion wanted to spare Paul’s life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. **44**The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely.

**Paul Ashore on Malta**

28Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. **2**The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. **3**Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. **4**When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, “This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live.” **5**But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. **6**The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

**7**There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. **8**His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. **9**When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. **10**They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

**Paul’s Arrival at Rome**

**11**After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island—it was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. **12**We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. **13**From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli.**14**There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. **15**The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged. **16**When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

**Paul Preaches at Rome Under Guard**

**17**Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: “My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. **18**They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. **19**The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people. **20**For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain.”

**21**They replied, “We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of our people who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you. **22**But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect.”

**23**They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus. **24**Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.**25**They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: “The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

**26**“‘Go to this people and say,  
“You will be ever hearing but never understanding;  
    you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.”  
**27**For this people’s heart has become calloused;  
    they hardly hear with their ears,  
    and they have closed their eyes.  
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,  
    hear with their ears,  
    understand with their hearts  
and turn, and I would heal them.’

**28**“Therefore I want you to know that God’s salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!” **[29]**

**30**For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. **31**He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

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### 31] HONOR AUTHORITY

### 1 Peter 2:13-17

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**13**Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, **14**or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. **15**For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. **16***Act* as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as bond slaves of God. **17**Honor all people, love the brotherhood,  fear God, honor the king.

[***New American Standard Bible***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-American-Standard-Bible-NASB/)***(NASB)***

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**32] A GOD-FILLED LIFE**

**Titus 2**

The Message (MSG)

2**1-6**Your job is to speak out on the things that make for solid doctrine. Guide older men into lives of temperance, dignity, and wisdom, into healthy faith, love, and endurance. Guide older women into lives of reverence so they end up as neither gossips nor drunks, but models of goodness. By looking at them, the younger women will know how to love their husbands and children, be virtuous and pure, keep a good house, be good wives. We don’t want anyone looking down on God’s Message because of their behavior. Also, guide the young men to live disciplined lives.

**7-8**But mostly, show them all this by doing it yourself, incorruptible in your teaching, your words solid and sane. Then anyone who is dead set against us, when he finds nothing weird or misguided, might eventually come around.

**9-10**Guide slaves into being loyal workers, a bonus to their masters—no back talk, no petty thievery. Then their good character will shine through their actions, adding luster to the teaching of our Savior God.

**11-14**God’s readiness to give and forgive is now public. Salvation’s available for everyone! We’re being shown how to turn our backs on a godless, indulgent life, and how to take on a God-filled, God-honoring life. This new life is starting right now, and is whetting our appetites for the glorious day when our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, appears. He offered himself as a sacrifice to free us from a dark, rebellious life into this good, pure life, making us a people he can be proud of, energetic in goodness.

**15**Tell them all this. Build up their courage, and discipline them if they get out of line. You’re in charge. Don’t let anyone put you down.

[***The Message***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/)***(MSG)***

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33] **GODLY LIVING**

### 1 Peter 3:1-9

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

3In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any *of them* are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, **2**as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. **3**Your adornment must not be *merely* external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; **4**but *let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God*. **5**For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; **6**just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.

**7**You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

**8**To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; **9**not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

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### 34] WALK IN THE LIGHT

### 1 John 1:5-10

The Message (MSG)

**5**This, in essence, is the message we heard from Christ and are passing on to you: God is light, pure light; there’s not a trace of darkness in him.

**6-7**If we claim that we experience a shared life with him and continue to stumble around in the dark, we’re obviously lying through our teeth—we’re not *living* what we claim. But if we walk in the light, God himself being the light, we also experience a shared life with one another, as the sacrificed blood of Jesus, God’s Son, purges all our sin.

**8-10**If we claim that we’re free of sin, we’re only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins—make a clean breast of them—he won’t let us down; he’ll be true to himself. He’ll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing. If we claim that we’ve never sinned, we out-and-out contradict God—make a liar out of him. A claim like that only shows off our ignorance of God.

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### 35] CHILDREN OF GOD, LOVE ONE ANOTHER

### 1 John 3

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

3See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. **2**Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when Heappears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. **3**And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

**4**Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. **5**You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. **6**No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. **7**Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; **8**the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. **9**No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. **10**By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

**11**For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; **12**not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother’s were righteous.

**13**Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.**14**We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. **15**Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.**16**We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. **17**But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? **18**Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth. **19**We will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him**20**in whatever our heart condemns us; for God is greater than our heart and knows all things. **21**Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; **22**and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.

**23**This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. **24**The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

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### 36] GOD IS LOVE

### 1 John 4:7-21

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**7**Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **8**The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. **9**By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. **10**In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. **11**Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **12**No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. **13**By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. **14**We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *to be* the Savior of the world.

**15**Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. **16**We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. **17**By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. **18**There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. **19**We love, because He first loved us. **20**If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. **21**And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

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### 37] GENEROSITY ENCOURAGED

### 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

New International Version (NIV)

**6**Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. **7**Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **8**And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. **9**As it is written:

“They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;  
    their righteousness endures forever.”

**10**Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. **11**You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

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### 38] GOD’S CHILDREN THROUGH FAITH

### Galatians 3:23-28

New Living Translation (NLT)

**23**Before the way of faith in Christ was available to us, we were placed under guard by the law. We were kept in protective custody, so to speak, until the way of faith was revealed.

**24**Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith. **25**And now that the way of faith has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.

**26**For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus.**27**And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on Christ, like putting on new clothes. **28**There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

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### 39] DOING GOOD TO ALL

### Galatians 6:1-10

New International Version (NIV)

6Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. **2**Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. **3**If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. **4**Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, **5**for each one should carry their own load. **6**Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

**7**Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. **8**Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. **9**Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. **10**Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

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### 40] LIVING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT

**Ephesians 4**

New Living Translation (NLT)

**17**With the Lord’s authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. **18**Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. **19**They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

**20**But that isn’t what you learned about Christ. **21**Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, **22**throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception.**23**Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.**24**Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy.

**25**So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. **26**And “don’t sin by letting anger control you.” Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry, **27**for anger gives a foothold to the devil.

**28**If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. **29**Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

**30**And do not bring sorrow to God’s Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

**31**Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. **32**Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

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### 41] CHILDREN AND PARENTS

**Ephesians 6**

New Living Translation (NLT)

6Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. **2**“Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: **3**If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.”

**4**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

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**42] NO ONE IS RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD**

### Romans 3:9-20

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**9**What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;**10**as it is written,

“There is none righteous, not even one;  
**11**There is none who understands,  
There is none who seeks for God;  
**12**All have turned aside, together they have become useless;  
There is none who does good,  
There is not even one.”  
**13**“Their throat is an open grave,  
With their tongues they keep deceiving,”  
“The poison of asps is under their lips”;  
**14**“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness”;  
**15**“Their feet are swift to shed blood,  
**16**Destruction and misery are in their paths,  
**17**And the path of peace they have not known.”  
**18**“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

**19**Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;**20**because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

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### 43] FAITH IN ACTION

### Hebrews 11

New International Version (NIV)

11Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. **2**This is what the ancients were commended for.

**3**By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

**4**By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

**5**By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.” For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. **6**And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

**7**By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

**8**By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. **9**By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. **10**For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. **11**And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. **12**And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

**13**All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. **14**People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own.**15**If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. **16**Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

**17**By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, **18**even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.”**19**Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

**20**By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

**21**By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph’s sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

**22**By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.

**23**By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.

**24**By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. **25**He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. **26**He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. **27**By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king’s anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. **28**By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyerof the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

**29**By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

**30**By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.

**31**By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.

**32**And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, **33**who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, **34**quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. **35**Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. **36**Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. **37**They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— **38**the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

**39**These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, **40**since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

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### 44] FAITH AND DEEDS

### James 2:14-26

New International Version (NIV)

**14**What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? **15**Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. **16**If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? **17**In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

**18**But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.”

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. **19**You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

**20**You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? **21**Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? **22**You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. **23**And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. **24**You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

**25**In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? **26**As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

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### 45] FAITH UNDER PRESSURE

### James 1:2-18

The Message (MSG)

**2-4**Consider it a sheer gift, friends, when tests and challenges come at you from all sides. You know that under pressure, your faith-life is forced into the open and shows its true colors. So don’t try to get out of anything prematurely. Let it do its work so you become mature and well-developed, not deficient in any way.

**5-8**If you don’t know what you’re doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You’ll get his help, and won’t be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought. People who “worry their prayers” are like wind-whipped waves. Don’t think you’re going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open.

**9-11**When down-and-outers get a break, cheer! And when the arrogant rich are brought down to size, cheer! Prosperity is as short-lived as a wildflower, so don’t ever count on it. You know that as soon as the sun rises, pouring down its scorching heat, the flower withers. Its petals wilt and, before you know it, that beautiful face is a barren stem. Well, that’s a picture of the “prosperous life.” At the very moment everyone is looking on in admiration, it fades away to nothing.

**12**Anyone who meets a testing challenge head-on and manages to stick it out is mighty fortunate. For such persons loyally in love with God, the reward is life and more life.

**13-15**Don’t let anyone under pressure to give in to evil say, “God is trying to trip me up.” God is impervious to evil, and puts evil in no one’s way. The temptation to give in to evil comes from us and only us. We have no one to blame but the leering, seducing flare-up of our own lust. Lust gets pregnant, and has a baby: sin! Sin grows up to adulthood, and becomes a real killer.

**16-18**So, my very dear friends, don’t get thrown off course. Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of heaven. The gifts are rivers of light cascading down from the Father of Light. There is nothing deceitful in God, nothing two-faced, nothing fickle. He brought us to life using the true Word, showing us off as the crown of all his creatures.

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### 46] FAITH BRINGS JOY

### Romans 5:1-9

New Living Translation (NLT)

**5**Therefore, since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. **2**Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory.

**3**We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. **4**And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. **5**And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.

**6**When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. **7**Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good.**8**But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. **9**And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation.

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**47] JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH**

**Romans 3:21-5:2**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**21**But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, **22**even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; **23**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24**being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; **25**whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; **26**for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

**27**Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. **28**For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.**29**Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is He not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, **30**since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

**31**Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

### Justification by Faith Evidenced in Old Testament

4What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? **2**For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. **3**For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” **4**Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. **5**But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, **6**just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

**7**“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven,  
And whose sins have been covered.  
**8**“Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”

**9**Is this blessing then on the circumcised, or on the uncircumcised also? For we say, “Faith was credited to Abraham as righteousness.” **10**How then was it credited? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised; **11**and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, so that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be credited to them, **12**and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised.

**13**For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. **14**For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; **15**for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.

**16**For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, **17**(as it is written, “A father of many nations have I made you”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. **18**In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, “So shall your descendants be.”**19**Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah’s womb; **20**yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, **21**and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform. **22**Therefore it was also credited to him as righteousness. **23**Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, **24**but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, **25***He* who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.

### Results of Justification

5Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, **2**through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

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### 48] DEAD TO SIN, ALIVE IN CHRIST

### Romans 6

New International Version (NIV)

6What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? **2**By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? **3**Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4**We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

**5**For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.**6**For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— **7**because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

**8**Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. **9**For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. **10**The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

**11**In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. **12**Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. **13**Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. **14**For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

### Slaves to Righteousness

**15**What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? By no means! **16**Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin,which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? **17**But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance.**18**You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

**19**I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness. **20**When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. **21**What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! **22***But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.****23****For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

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### 49] THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

### Romans 12

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

12I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.**2**Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**3**For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. **4**For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, **5**so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. **6**We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; **7**ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; **8**the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

### Marks of the True Christian

**9**Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; **10**love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. **11**Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. **12**Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. **13**Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

**14**Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. **15**Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. **16**Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. **17**Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. **18**If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.**19**Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” **20**No, “if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.”**21**Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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### 50] Submission to Governing Authorities

### Romans 13:1-8

New International Version (NIV)

13Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.**2**Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. **3**For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. **4**For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God’s servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrong doer.  **5**Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.

**6**This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing. **7**Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

### Love Fulfills the Law

**8**Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

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### 51] MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

### Mark 10:1-12

New International Version (NIV)

### Divorce

**10**Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

**2**Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

**3**“What did Moses command you?” he replied.

**4**They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”

**5**“It was *because your hearts were hard* that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. **6** “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ **7**‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,**8**and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. **9**Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

**10**When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. **11**He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. **12**And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”

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### 52] TEACHING ON MARRIAGE

**1 Corinthians 7**

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

7Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. **2**But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. **3**The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. **4**The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*.**5**Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. **6**But this I say by way of concession, not of command. **7**Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.

**8**But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. **9**But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn *with passion*.

**10**But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband **11**(but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.

**12**But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. **13**And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. **14**For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. **15**Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such *cases*, but God has called us to peace. **16**For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

**17**Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches. **18**Was any man called *when he was already* circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? He is not to be circumcised.**19**Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but *what matters is* the keeping of the commandments of God.**20**Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called.

**21**Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that. **22**For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord’s freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ’s slave. **23**You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. **24**Brethren, each one is to remain with God in that *condition* in which he was called.

**25**Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy. **26**I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.**27**Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. **28**But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you. **29**But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; **30**and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess; **31**and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.

**32**But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; **33**but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife,**34**and *his interests* are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband. **35**This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and *to secure* undistracted devotion to the Lord.

**36**But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin *daughter*, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry. **37**But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin *daughter*, he will do well. **38**So then both he who gives his own virgin *daughter* in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better.

**39**A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. **40**But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

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**53] PRAISE TO THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT**

### 2 Corinthians 1:3-5

New International Version (NIV)

**3**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, **4**who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. **5**For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

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### 54] FREEDOM IN CHRIST

### Galatians 5:1-12

New International Version (NIV)

5It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

**2**Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. **3**Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. **4**You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. **5**For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope.**6**For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

**7**You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? **8**That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. **9**“A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough.” **10**I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. **11**Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. **12**As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

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### 55] LIFE BY THE SPIRIT

### Galatians 5:13-26

New International Version (NIV)

**13**You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. **14**For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “**Love your neighbor** **as yourself**.”**15**If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

**16**So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. **17**For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. **18**But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

**19***The acts of the flesh* are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; **20**idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions **21**and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**22**But *the fruit of the Spirit* is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23**gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. **24**Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25**Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. **26**Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

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### 56] SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN CHRIST

### Ephesians 1:3-14

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

**3**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4**just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. **5**He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, **6**to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. **7**In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace **8**that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight **9**he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ,**10**as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. **11**In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, **12**so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. **13**In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; **14**this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory.

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### 57] THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

### Ephesians 1:15-21

New International Version (NIV)

**15**For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God’s people, **16**I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. **17**I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. **18**I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, **19**and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength **20**he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, **21**far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

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### 58] UNITY IN THE BODY

### Ephesians 4:1-16

New Living Translation (NLT)

4Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.**2**Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love.**3**Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. **4**For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. **5**There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6**and one God and Father, who is over all and in all and living through all.

**7**However, he has given each one of us a special gift through the generosity of Christ. **8**That is why the Scriptures say,

“When he ascended to the heights,  
    he led a crowd of captives  
    and gave gifts to his people.”

**9**Notice that it says “he ascended.” This clearly means that Christ also descended to our lowly world. **10**And the same one who descended is the one who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that he might fill the entire universe with himself.

**11**Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. **12**Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. **13**This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God’s Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

**14**Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won’t be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. **15**Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. **16**He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.

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### 59] BE IMITATORS OF GOD

### Ephesians 5:1-21

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

5Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; **2**and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

**3**But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; **4**and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. **5**For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

**6**Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. **7**Therefore do not be partakers with them; **8**foryou were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light **9**(for the fruit of the Light *consists* in all goodness and righteousness and truth),**10**trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. **11**Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; **12**for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. **13**But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. **14**For this reason it says,

“Awake, sleeper,  
And arise from the dead,  
And Christ will shine on you.”

**15**Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, **16**making the most of your time, because the days are evil. **17**So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. **18**And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,  **19**speaking to one another in  psalms and  hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; **20**always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; **21**and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

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### 60] SPIRIT-GUIDED RELATIONSHIPS: WIVES AND HUSBANDS

### Ephesians 5:21-33

New Living Translation (NLT)

**21**And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

**22**For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. **23**For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church.**24**As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

**25**For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her **26**to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word. **27**He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. **28**In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. **29**No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. **30**And we are members of his body.

**31**As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.”**32**This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. **33**So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

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### 61] CHILDREN AND PARENTS

### Ephesians 6:1-4

New Living Translation (NLT)

6Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. **2**“Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: **3**If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.”

**4**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

[***New Living Translation***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Living-Translation-NLT-Bible/)***(NLT)***

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**62] SERVICE ON THE JOB**

### Ephesians 6:5-9

The Message (MSG)

**5-8**Servants, respectfully obey your earthly masters but always with an eye to obeying the *real* master, Christ. Don’t just do what you have to do to get by, but work heartily, as Christ’s servants doing what God wants you to do. And work with a smile on your face, always keeping in mind that no matter who happens to be giving the orders, you’re really serving God. Good work will get you good pay from the Master, regardless of whether you are slave or free.

**9**Masters, it’s the same with you. No abuse, please, and no threats. You and your servants are both under the same Master in heaven. He makes no distinction between you and them.

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### 63] A FIGHT TO THE FINISH

### Ephesians 6:10-18

The Message (MSG)

**10-12**And that about wraps it up. God is strong, and he wants you strong. So take everything the Master has set out for you, well-made weapons of the best materials. And put them to use so you will be able to stand up to everything the Devil throws your way. This is no afternoon athletic contest that we’ll walk away from and forget about in a couple of hours. This is for keeps, a life-or-death fight to the finish against the Devil and all his angels.

**13-18**Be prepared. You’re up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, every weapon God has issued, so that when it’s all over but the shouting you’ll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You’ll need them throughout your life. God’s Word is an *indispensable* weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other’s spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

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### 64] IMITATING CHRIST’S HUMILITY

### Philippians 2:1-18

New International Version (NIV)

2Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,**2**then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. **3**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, **4**not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

**5**In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

**6**Who, being in very nature God,  
    did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;  
**7**rather, he made himself nothing  
    by taking the very nature of a servant,  
    being made in human likeness.  
**8**And being found in appearance as a man,  
    he humbled himself  
    by becoming obedient to death—  
        even death on a cross!

**9**Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
    and gave him the name that is above every name,  
**10**that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
    in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
**11**and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
    to the glory of God the Father.

### Do Everything Without Grumbling

**12**Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,**13**for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

**14**Do everything without grumbling or arguing, **15**so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky **16**as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. **17**But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. **18**So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

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### 65] REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS

### Philippians 4:4-9

New International Version (NIV)

**4**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! **5**Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. **6**Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.**7**And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

**8**Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. **9**Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

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### 66] THE SUPREMACY OF THE SON OF GOD

### Colossians 1:15-28

New International Version (NIV)

**15**The Son is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation. **16**For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. **17**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18**And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the first born from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. **19**For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, **20**and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

**21**Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. **22**But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— **23**if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

### Paul’s Labor for the Church

**24**Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. **25**I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— **26**the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. **27**To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

**28**He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.

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### 67] RULES FOR HOLY LIVING

### Colossians 3:1-17

New International Version (NIV)

3Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3**For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4**When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

**5**Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **6**Because of these, the wrath of Godis coming. **7**You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. **8**But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **9**Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **10**and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. **11**Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

**12**Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13**Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14**And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

**15**Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16**Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. **17**And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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### 68] BELIEVERS WHO HAVE DIED

### 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

New International Version (NIV)

**13**Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. **14**For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.**15**According to the Lord’s word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. **16**For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.**17**After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. **18**Therefore encourage one another with these words.

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### 69] CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

### 1 Thessalonians 5:12-24

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**12**But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, **13**and that you esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. **14**We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. **15**See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. **16**Rejoice always; **17**pray without ceasing; **18**in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. **19**Do not quench the Spirit; **20**do not despise prophetic utterances.  **21**But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good; **22**abstain from every form of evil.

**23**Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.**24**Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

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### 70] WARNING AGAINST IDLENESS

### 2 Thessalonians 3:6-16

New International Version (NIV)

**6**In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching you received from us. **7**For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, **8**nor did we eat anyone’s food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. **9**We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate.**10**For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.”

**11**We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. **12**Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. **13**And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.

**14**Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. **15**Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer.

**16**Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

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### 71] LEADERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

### 1 Timothy 3:1-13

The Message (MSG)

3**1-7**If anyone wants to provide leadership in the church, good! But there are preconditions: A leader must be well-thought-of, committed to his wife, cool and collected, accessible, and hospitable. He must know what he’s talking about, not be over fond of wine, not pushy but gentle, not thin-skinned, not money-hungry. He must handle his own affairs well, attentive to his own children and having their respect. For if someone is unable to handle his own affairs, how can he take care of God’s church? He must not be a new believer, lest the position go to his head and the Devil trip him up. Outsiders must think well of him, or else the Devil will figure out a way to lure him into his trap.

**8-13**The same goes for those who want to be servants in the church: serious, not deceitful, not too free with the bottle, not in it for what they can get out of it. They must be reverent before the mystery of the faith, not using their position to try to run things. Let them prove themselves first. If they show they can do it, take them on. No exceptions are to be made for women—same qualifications: serious, dependable, not sharp-tongued, not over fond of wine. Servants in the church are to be committed to their spouses, attentive to their own children, and diligent in looking after their own affairs. Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith.

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### 72] WARNINGS AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS

### 1 Timothy 4:1-16

New Living Translation (NLT)

4 Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.**2**These people are hypocrites and liars, and their consciences are dead.

**3**They will say it is wrong to be married and wrong to eat certain foods. But God created those foods to be eaten with thanks by faithful people who know the truth. **4**Since everything God created is good, we should not reject any of it but receive it with thanks. **5**For we know it is made acceptable by the word of God and prayer.

### A Good Servant of Christ Jesus

**6**If you explain these things to the brothers and sisters, Timothy, you will be a worthy servant of Christ Jesus, one who is nourished by the message of faith and the good teaching you have followed. **7**Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives’ tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. **8**“Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.” **9**This is a trustworthy saying, and everyone should accept it. **10**This is why we work hard and continue to struggle, for our hope is in the living God, who is the Savior of all people and particularly of all believers.

**11**Teach these things and insist that everyone learn them.**12**Don’t let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity. **13**Until I get there, focus on reading the Scriptures to the church, encouraging the believers, and teaching them.

**14**Do not neglect the spiritual gift you received through the prophecy spoken over you when the elders of the church laid their hands on you. **15**Give your complete attention to these matters. Throw yourself into your tasks so that everyone will see your progress. **16**Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you.

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### 73] THE FAMILY OF FAITH

### 1 Timothy 5:1-23

The Message (MSG)

5**1-2** Don’t be harsh or impatient with an older man. Talk to him as you would your own father, and to the younger men as your brothers. Reverently honor an older woman as you would your mother, and the younger women as sisters.

**3-8**Take care of widows who are destitute. If a widow has family members to take care of her, let them learn that religion begins at their own doorstep and that they should pay back with gratitude some of what they have received. This pleases God immensely. You can tell a legitimate widow by the way she has put all her hope in God, praying to him constantly for the needs of others as well as her own. But a widow who exploits people’s emotions and pocketbooks—well, there’s nothing to her. Tell these things to the people so that they will do the right thing in their extended family. Anyone who neglects to care for family members in need repudiates the faith. That’s worse than refusing to believe in the first place.

**9-10**Sign some widows up for the special ministry of offering assistance. They will in turn receive support from the church. They must be over sixty, married only once, and have a reputation for helping out with children, strangers, tired Christians, the hurt and troubled.

**11-15**Don’t put young widows on this list. No sooner will they get on than they’ll want to get off, obsessed with wanting to get a husband rather than serving Christ in this way. By breaking their word, they’re liable to go from bad to worse, frittering away their days on empty talk, gossip, and trivialities. No, I’d rather the young widows go ahead and get married in the first place, have children, manage their homes, and not give critics any foothold for finding fault. Some of them have already left and gone after Satan.

**16**Any Christian woman who has widows in her family is responsible for them. They shouldn’t be dumped on the church. The church has its hands full already with widows who need help.

**17-18**Give a bonus to leaders who do a good job, especially the ones who work hard at preaching and teaching. Scripture tells us, “Don’t muzzle a working ox” and “A worker deserves his pay.”

**19**Don’t listen to a complaint against a leader that isn’t backed up by two or three responsible witnesses.

**20**If anyone falls into sin, call that person on the carpet. Those who are inclined that way will know right off they can’t get by with it.

**21-23**God and Jesus and angels all back me up in these instructions. Carry them out without favoritism, without taking sides. Don’t appoint people to church leadership positions too hastily. If a person is involved in some serious sins, you don’t want to become an unwitting accomplice. In any event, keep a close check on yourself. And don’t worry too much about what the critics will say. Go ahead and drink a little wine, for instance; it’s good for your digestion, good medicine for what ails you.

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### 74] INSTRUCTIONS TO THOSE WHO MINISTER

### 1 Timothy 6:1-16

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

6All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and *our* doctrine will not be spoken against. **2**Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these *principles*.

**3**If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, **4**he is conceited *and* understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions,**5**and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. **6**But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. **7**For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. **8**If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. **9**But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. **10**For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

**11**But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness. **12**Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. **13**I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate, **14**that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, **15**which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,**16**who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him *be* honor and eternal dominion! Amen.

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### 75] “DIFFICULT TIMES WILL COME”

### 2 Timothy 3:1-9

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

3But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. **2**For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers,  disobedient to parents, ungrateful,  unholy,  **3**unloving, irreconcilable,  malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,**4**treacherous,  reckless, conceited,  lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5**holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. **6**For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, **7**always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. **8**Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these *men* also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith. **9**But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes’s and Jambres’s folly was also.

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### 76] IDOL FEASTS AND THE LORD’S SUPPER

### 1 Corinthians 10:14-17

New International Version (NIV)

**14**Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. **15**I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. **16**Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? **17**Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

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### 77] WARNING AGAINST IDOLATRY

### 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

New International Version (NIV)

**14**Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? **15**What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believerhave in common with an unbeliever? **16**What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will live with them  
    and walk among them,  
and I will be their God,  
    and they will be my people.”

**17**Therefore,

“Come out from them  
    and be separate,  
says the Lord.  
Touch no unclean thing,  
    and I will receive you.”

**18**And,

“*I will be a Father to you,  
    and you will be my sons and daughters,  
says the Lord Almighty*.”

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### 78] THE BELIEVER’S FREEDOM

### 1 Corinthians 10:23-33

New International Version (NIV)

**23**“I have the right to do anything,” you say—but not everything is beneficial. “I have the right to do anything”—but not everything is constructive. **24**No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

**25**Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, **26**for, “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it.”

**27**If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. **28**But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. **29**I am referring to the other person’s conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another’s conscience? **30**If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

**31**So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. **32**Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— **33**even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

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### 79] CONCERNING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

### 1 Corinthians 12:1-13

New International Version (NIV)

12Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. **2**You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. **3**Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

**4**There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. **5**There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. **6**There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

**7**Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. **8**To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, **9**to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, **10**to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. **11**All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

### Unity and Diversity in the Body

**12**Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. **13**For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

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### 80] PRAYER LANGUAGE

### 1 Corinthians 14

The Message (MSG)

14**1-3**Go after a life of love as if your life depended on it—because it does. Give yourselves to the gifts God gives you. Most of all, try to proclaim his truth. If you praise him in the private language of tongues, God understands you but no one else does, for you are sharing intimacies just between you and him. But when you proclaim his truth in everyday speech, you’re letting *others* in on the truth so that they can grow and be strong and experience his presence with you.

**4-5**The one who prays using a private “prayer language” certainly gets a lot out of it, but proclaiming God’s truth to the church in its common language brings the whole church into growth and strength. I want all of you to develop intimacies with God in prayer, but please don’t stop with that. Go on and proclaim his clear truth to others. It’s more important that everyone have access to the knowledge and love of God in language everyone understands than that you go off and cultivate God’s presence in a mysterious prayer language—unless, of course, there is someone who can interpret what you are saying for the benefit of all.

**6-8**Think, friends: If I come to you and all I do is pray privately to God in a way only he can understand, what are you going to get out of that? If I don’t address you plainly with some insight or truth or proclamation or teaching, what help am I to you? If musical instruments—flutes, say, or harps—aren’t played so that each note is distinct and in tune, how will anyone be able to catch the melody and enjoy the music? If the trumpet call can’t be distinguished, will anyone show up for the battle?

**9-12**So if you speak in a way no one can understand, what’s the point of opening your mouth? There are many languages in the world and they all mean something to someone. But if I don’t understand the language, it’s not going to do me much good. It’s no different with you. Since you’re so eager to participate in what God is doing, why don’t you concentrate on doing what helps everyone in the church?

**13-17**So, when you pray in your private prayer language, don’t hoard the experience for yourself. Pray for the insight and ability to bring others into that intimacy. If I pray in tongues, my spirit prays but my mind lies fallow, and all that intelligence is wasted. So what’s the solution? The answer is simple enough. Do both. I should be spiritually free and expressive as I pray, but I should also be thoughtful and mindful as I pray. I should sing with my spirit, and sing with my mind. If you give a blessing using your private prayer language, which no one else understands, how can some outsider who has just shown up and has no idea what’s going on know when to say “Amen”? Your blessing might be beautiful, but you have very effectively cut that person out of it.

**18-19**I’m grateful to God for the gift of praying in tongues that he gives us for praising him, which leads to wonderful intimacies we enjoy with him. I enter into this as much or more than any of you. But when I’m in a church assembled for worship, I’d rather say five words that everyone can understand and learn from than say ten thousand that sound to others like gibberish.

**20-25**To be perfectly frank, I’m getting exasperated with your infantile thinking. How long before you grow up and use your head—your *adult* head? It’s all right to have a childlike unfamiliarity with evil; a simple *no* is all that’s needed there. But there’s far more to saying *yes*to something. Only mature and well-exercised intelligence can save you from falling into gullibility. It’s written in Scripture that God said,

In strange tongues  
    and from the mouths of strangers  
I will preach to this people,  
    but they’ll neither listen nor believe.

So where does it get you, all this speaking in tongues no one understands? It doesn’t help believers, and it only gives unbelievers something to gawk at. Plain truth-speaking, on the other hand, goes straight to the heart of believers and doesn’t get in the way of unbelievers. If you come together as a congregation and some unbelieving outsiders walk in on you as you’re all praying in tongues, unintelligible to each other and to them, won’t they assume you’ve taken leave of your senses and get out of there as fast as they can? But if some unbelieving outsiders walk in on a service where people are speaking out God’s truth, the plain words will bring them up against the truth and probe their hearts. Before you know it, they’re going to be on their faces before God, recognizing that God is among you.

**26-33**So here’s what I want you to do. When you gather for worship, each one of you be prepared with something that will be useful for all: Sing a hymn, teach a lesson, tell a story, lead a prayer, provide an insight. If prayers are offered in tongues, two or three’s the limit, and then only if someone is present who can interpret what you’re saying. Otherwise, keep it between God and yourself. And no more than two or three speakers at a meeting, with the rest of you listening and taking it to heart. Take your turn, no one person taking over. Then each speaker gets a chance to say something special from God, and you all learn from each other. If you choose to speak, you’re also responsible for how and when you speak. When we worship the right way, God doesn’t stir us up into confusion; he brings us into harmony. This goes for all the churches—no exceptions.

**34-36**Wives must not disrupt worship, talking when they should be listening, asking questions that could more appropriately be asked of their husbands at home. God’s Book of the law guides our manners and customs here. Wives have no license to use the time of worship for unwarranted speaking. Do you—both women *and* men—imagine that you’re a sacred oracle determining what’s right and wrong? Do you think everything revolves around you?

**37-38**If any one of you thinks God has something for you to say or has inspired you to do something, pay close attention to what I have written. This is the way the Master wants it. If you won’t play by these rules, God can’t use you. Sorry.

**39-40**Three things, then, to sum this up: When you speak forth God’s truth, speak your heart out. Don’t tell people how they should or shouldn’t pray when they’re praying in tongues that you don’t understand. Be courteous and considerate in everything.

[***The Message***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/)***(MSG)***

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### 81] THE ORDER OF RESURRECTION

### 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**20**But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. **21**For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead.**22**For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. **23**But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ’s at His coming, **24**then *comes* the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.**25**For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. **26**The last enemy that will be abolished is death.**27**For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.**28**When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

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### 82] THE RESURRECTION BODY

### 1 Corinthians 15:35-50

New International Version (NIV)

**35**But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?” **36**How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. **37**When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else. **38**But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body. **39**Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another. **40**There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. **41**The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

**42**So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; **43**it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; **44**it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. **45**So it is written: “The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. **46**The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. **47**The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven. **48**As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. **49**And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

**50**I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

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### 83] THE TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL

### 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

5For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. **2**For indeed in this *house*we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, **3**inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. **4**For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to beclothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.**5**Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, whogave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

**6**Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing thatwhile we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— **7**for we walk by faith, not by sight— **8**we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. **9**Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. **10**For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

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### 84] THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

### 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

**11**Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. **12**We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. **13**For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. **14**For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. **15**And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

**16**From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. **17**So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! **18**All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; **19**that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. **20**So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. **21**For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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### 85] QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

### Titus 1:5-16

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

**5**For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, **6***namely*, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. **7**For the overseer must be above reproach as God’s steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, **8**but  hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,  **9**holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict.

**10**For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, **11**who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain. **12**One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” **13**This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, **14**not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. **15**To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. **16**They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.

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### 86] DON’T THROW IT ALL AWAY

### Hebrews 10:19-39

The Message (MSG)

**19-21**So, friends, we can now—without hesitation—walk right up to God, into “the Holy Place.” Jesus has cleared the way by the blood of his sacrifice, acting as our priest before God. The “curtain” into God’s presence is his body.

**22-25**So let’s *do* it—full of belief, confident that we’re presentable inside and out. Let’s keep a firm grip on the promises that keep us going. He always keeps his word. Let’s see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out, not avoiding worshiping together as some do but spurring each other on, especially as we see the big Day approaching.

**26-31**If we give up and turn our backs on all we’ve learned, all we’ve been given, all the truth we now know, we repudiate Christ’s sacrifice and are left on our own to face the Judgment—and a mighty fierce judgment it will be! If the penalty for breaking the law of Moses is physical death, what do you think will happen if you turn on God’s Son, spit on the sacrifice that made you whole, and insult this most gracious Spirit? This is no light matter. God has warned us that he’ll hold us to account and make us pay. He was quite explicit: “Vengeance is mine, and I won’t overlook a thing” and “God will judge his people.” Nobody’s getting by with anything, believe me.

**32-39**Remember those early days after you first saw the light? Those were the hard times! Kicked around in public, targets of every kind of abuse—some days it was you, other days your friends. If some friends went to prison, you stuck by them. If some enemies broke in and seized your goods, you let them go with a smile, knowing they couldn’t touch your real treasure. Nothing they did bothered you, nothing set you back. So don’t throw it all away now. You were sure of yourselves then. It’s *still* a sure thing! But you need to stick it out, staying with God’s plan so you’ll be there for the promised completion.

It won’t be long now, he’s on the way;  
    he’ll show up most any minute.  
But anyone who is right with me thrives on loyal trust;  
    if he cuts and runs, I won’t be very happy.

But we’re not quitters who lose out. Oh, no! We’ll stay with it and survive, trusting all the way.

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### 87] TENDING THE FLOCK OF GOD

### 1 Peter 5:1-9

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

5Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you **2**to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. **3**Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. **4**And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. **5**In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for

“God opposes the proud,  
    but gives grace to the humble.”

**6**Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. **7**Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. **8**Discipline yourselves, keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. **9**Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering.

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### 88] CONFIRMING ONE’S CALLING AND ELECTION

### 2 Peter 1:3-14

New International Version (NIV)

**3**His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. **4**Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

**5**For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; **6**and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; **7**and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. **8**For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. **9**But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

**10**Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, **11**and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

### Prophecy of Scripture

**12**So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. **13**I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, **14**because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me.

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### 89] THE DAY OF THE LORD

### 2 Peter 3

New International Version (NIV)

3Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. **2**I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

**3**Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. **4**They will say, “Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” **5**But they deliberately forget that long ago by God’s word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. **6**By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. **7**By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

**8**But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. **9**The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

**10**But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

**11**Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives **12**as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.**13**But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

**14**So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. **15**Bear in mind that our Lord’s patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. **16**He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

**17**Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. **18**But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

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### 90] JUDGMENT ON FALSE TEACHERS

### Jude 1:5-16

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

**5**Now I desire to remind you, though you are fully informed, that the Lord, who once for all saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe.**6**And the angels who did not keep their own position, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deepest darkness for the judgment of the great day. **7**Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which, in the same manner as they, indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural lust, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

**8**Yet in the same way these dreamers also defile the flesh, reject authority, and slander the glorious ones. **9**But when the archangel Michael contended with the devil and disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare to bring a condemnation of slander against him, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” **10**But these people slander whatever they do not understand, and they are destroyed by those things that, like irrational animals, they know by instinct. **11**Woe to them! For they go the way of Cain, and abandon themselves to Balaam’s error for the sake of gain, and perish in Korah’s rebellion. **12**These are blemishes on your love-feasts, while they feast with you without fear, feeding themselves. They are waterless clouds carried along by the winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, uprooted; **13**wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom the deepest darkness has been reserved forever.

**14**It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, “See, the Lord is coming with ten thousands of his holy ones, **15**to execute judgment on all, and to convict everyone of all the deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” **16**These are grumblers and malcontents; they indulge their own lusts; they are bombastic in speech, flattering people to their own advantage.

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### 91] THE MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

### Revelation 2

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

### The Message to Ephesus

### 2 “To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks among the seven golden lampstands:

**2**“I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance. I know that you cannot tolerate evildoers; you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them to be false. **3**I also know that you are enduring patiently and bearing up for the sake of my name, and that you have not grown weary. **4**But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. **5**Remember then from what you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place, unless you repent. **6**Yet this is to your credit: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. **7**Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers, I will give permission to eat from the tree of life that is in the paradise of God.

### The Message to Smyrna

**8**“And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: These are the words of the first and the last, who was dead and came to life:

**9**“I know your affliction and your poverty, even though you are rich. I know the slander on the part of those who say that they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.**10**Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Beware, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison so that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have affliction. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. **11**Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Whoever conquers will not be harmed by the second death.

### The Message to Pergamum

**12**“And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: These are the words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword:

**13**“I know where you are living, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you are holding fast to my name, and you did not deny your faith in me even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan lives.**14**But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the people of Israel, so that they would eat food sacrificed to idols and practice fornication.**15**So you also have some who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. **16**Repent then. If not, I will come to you soon and make war against them with the sword of my mouth.**17**Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. To everyone who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and on the white stone is written a new name that no one knows except the one who receives it.

### The Message to Thyatira

**18**“And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: These are the words of the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like burnished bronze:

**19**“I know your works—your love, faith, service, and patient endurance. I know that your last works are greater than the first. **20**But I have this against you: you tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet and is teaching and beguiling my servants to practice fornication and to eat food sacrificed to idols. **21**I gave her time to repent, but she refuses to repent of her fornication. **22**Beware, I am throwing her on a bed, and those who commit adultery with her I am throwing into great distress, unless they repent of her doings;**23**and I will strike her children dead. And all the churches will know that I am the one who searches minds and hearts, and I will give to each of you as your works deserve. **24**But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call ‘the deep things of Satan,’ to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden; **25**only hold fast to what you have until I come. **26**To everyone who conquers and continues to do my works to the end,

I will give authority over the nations;  
**27**to rule them with an iron rod,  
    as when clay pots are shattered—

**28**even as I also received authority from my Father. To the one who conquers I will also give the morning star. **29**Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

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### Revelation 3

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

### The Message to Sardis

**3**“And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars:

“I know your works; you have a name of being alive, but you are dead. **2**Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is on the point of death, for I have not found your works perfect in the sight of my God. **3**Remember then what you received and heard; obey it, and repent. If you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you. **4**Yet you have still a few persons in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes; they will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. **5**If you conquer, you will be clothed like them in white robes, and I will not blot your name out of the book of life; I will confess your name before my Father and before his angels. **6**Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

### The Message to Philadelphia

**7**“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of the holy one, the true one,  
    who has the key of David,  
    who opens and no one will shut,  
        who shuts and no one opens:

**8**“I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. **9**I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying—I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you. **10**Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. **11**I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. **12**If you conquer, I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. **13**Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

### The Message to Laodicea

**14**“And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the origin of God’s creation:

**15**“I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot. **16**So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. **17**For you say, ‘I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.’ You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. **18**Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. **19**I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent. **20**Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. **21**To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, just as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. **22**Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.”

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### 92] THE TWO WITNESSES

### Revelation 11:1-13

New International Version (NIV)

11I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, “Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. **2**But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. **3**And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.” **4**They are “the two olive trees” and the two lamp stands, and “they stand before the Lord of the earth.”**5**If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. **6**They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

**7**Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. **8**Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified. **9**For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial.**10**The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

**11**But after the three and a half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. **12**Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.

**13**At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

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### 93] THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON

### Revelation 12

New International Version (NIV)

12A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. **2**She was pregnant and cried out in painas she was about to give birth. **3**Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and seven crowns on its heads. **4**Its tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born. **5**She gave birth to a son, a male child, who “will rule all the nations with an iron scepter.” And her child was snatched up to God and to his throne. **6**The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days.

**7**Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. **8**But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. **9**The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

**10**Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

“Now have come the salvation and the power  
    and the kingdom of our God,  
    and the authority of his Messiah.  
For the accuser of our brothers and sisters,  
    who accuses them before our God day and night,  
    has been hurled down.  
**11**They triumphed over him  
    by the blood of the Lamb  
    and by the word of their testimony;  
they did not love their lives so much  
    as to shrink from death.  
**12**Therefore rejoice, you heavens  
    and you who dwell in them!  
But woe to the earth and the sea,  
    because the devil has gone down to you!  
He is filled with fury,  
    because he knows that his time is short.”

**13**When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. **14**The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent’s reach. **15**Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent.**16**But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. **17**Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God’s commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.

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### 94] THE LAMB AND THE 144,000

### Revelation 14:1-5

New International Version (NIV)

**14**Then I looked, and there before me was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000 who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads. **2**And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thunder. The sound I heard was like that of harpists playing their harps. **3**And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders. No one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. **4**These are those who did not defile themselves with women, for they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among mankind and offered as first fruits to God and the Lamb. **5**No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.

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### 95] THE SEVEN BOWLS OF GOD’S WRATH

### Revelation 16

New International Version (NIV)

16Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, “Go, pour out the seven bowls of God’s wrath on the earth.”

**2**The first angel went and poured out his bowl on the land, and ugly, festering sores broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and worshiped its image.

**3**The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead person, and every living thing in the sea died.

**4**The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. **5**Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say:

“You are just in these judgments, O Holy One,  
    you who are and who were;  
**6**for they have shed the blood of your holy people and your prophets,  
    and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve.”

**7**And I heard the altar respond:

“Yes, Lord God Almighty,  
    true and just are your judgments.”

**8**The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire. **9**They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.

**10**The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in agony **11**and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

**12**The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. **13**Then I saw three impure spiritsthat looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. **14**They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

**15**“Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed.”

**16**Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

**17**The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, “It is done!” **18**Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. **19**The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. **20**Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. **21**From the sky huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds, fell on people. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.

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### 96] A WHITE HORSE AND ITS RIDER

### Revelation 19:11-21

The Message (MSG)

**11-16**Then I saw Heaven open wide—and oh! a white horse and its Rider. The Rider, named Faithful and True, judges and makes war in pure righteousness. His eyes are a blaze of fire, on his head many crowns. He has a Name inscribed that’s known only to himself. He is dressed in a robe soaked with blood, and he is addressed as “Word of God.” The armies of Heaven, mounted on white horses and dressed in dazzling white linen, follow him. A sharp sword comes out of his mouth so he can subdue the nations, then rule them with a rod of iron. He treads the winepress of the raging wrath of God, the Sovereign-Strong. On his robe and thigh is written, King of kings, Lord of lords.

**17-18**I saw an Angel standing in the sun, shouting to all flying birds in Middle-Heaven, “Come to the Great Supper of God! Feast on the flesh of kings and captains and champions, horses and their riders. Eat your fill of them all—free and slave, small and great!”

**19-21**I saw the Beast and, assembled with him, earth’s kings and their armies, ready to make war against the One on the horse and his army. The Beast was taken, and with him, his puppet, the False Prophet, who used signs to dazzle and deceive those who had taken the mark of the Beast and worshiped his image. They were thrown alive, those two, into Lake Fire and Brimstone. The rest were killed by the sword of the One on the horse, the sword that comes from his mouth. All the birds held a feast on their flesh.

[***The Message***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/Message-MSG-Bible/)***(MSG)***

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### 97] A THOUSAND YEARS

### Revelation 20:1-10

The Message (MSG)

20**1-3**I saw an Angel descending out of Heaven. He carried the key to the Abyss and a chain—a huge chain. He grabbed the Dragon, that old Snake—the very Devil, Satan himself!—chained him up for a thousand years, dumped him into the Abyss, slammed it shut and sealed it tight. No more trouble out of him, deceiving the nations—until the thousand years are up. After that he has to be let loose briefly.

**4-6**I saw thrones. Those put in charge of judgment sat on the thrones. I also saw the souls of those beheaded because of their witness to Jesus and the Word of God, who refused to worship either the Beast or his image, refused to take his mark on forehead or hand—they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years! The rest of the dead did not live until the thousand years were up. This is the first resurrection—and those involved most blessed, most holy. No second death for them! They’re priests of God and Christ; they’ll reign with him a thousand years.

**7-10**When the thousand years are up, Satan will be let loose from his cell, and will launch again his old work of deceiving the nations, searching out victims in every nook and cranny of earth, even Gog and Magog! He’ll talk them into going to war and will gather a huge army, millions strong. They’ll stream across the earth, surround and lay siege to the camp of God’s holy people, the Beloved City. They’ll no sooner get there than fire will pour out of Heaven and burn them up. The Devil who deceived them will be hurled into Lake Fire and Brimstone, joining the Beast and False Prophet, the three in torment around the clock for ages without end.

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### 98] THE FINAL JUDGMENT

### Revelation 20:11-15

New Living Translation (NLT)

**11**And I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. The earth and sky fled from his presence, but they found no place to hide. **12**I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God’s throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books.**13**The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up their dead. And all were judged according to their deeds.**14**Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. **15**And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire.

[***New Living Translation***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Living-Translation-NLT-Bible/)***(NLT)***

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### 99] A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH

### Revelation 21

New International Version (NIV)

21Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. **2**I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. **3**And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. **4**‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

**5**He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

**6**He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. **7**Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. **8**But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”

### The New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb

**9**One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” **10**And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. **11**It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. **12**It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. **13**There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. **14**The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

**15**The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. **16**The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. **17**The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits thick. **18**The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. **19**The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, **20**the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. **21**The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

**22**I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. **23**The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. **24**The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. **25**On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. **26**The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. **27**Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

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### 100] EDEN RESTORED

### Revelation 22

New International Version (NIV)

**22**Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb **2**down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. **3**No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. **4**They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. **5**There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign forever and ever.

### John and the Angel

**6**The angel said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place.”

**7**“Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll.”

**8**I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me.**9**But he said to me, “Don’t do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!”

**10**Then he told me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near. **11**Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy.”

### Epilogue: Invitation and Warning

**12**“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. **13**I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

**14**“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. **15**Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

**16**“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches.  I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”

**17**The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

**18**I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. **19**And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of lifeand in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll.

**20**He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming soon.”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

**21**The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.

[***New International Version***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-International-Version-NIV-Bible/)***(NIV)***

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### 101] FINAL GREETINGS AND BENEDICTION

**2 Corinthians 13:11-13**

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

**11**Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. **12**Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

**13**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

[***New Revised Standard Version***](http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Revised-Standard-Version-NRSV-Bible/)***(NRSV)***

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