

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MARK

A messenger sent ahead (1:1-8)

1 This is the beginning of my account of the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²In the prophecy of Isaiah, God says: "I will first send my messenger ahead of You to prepare the way for You." ³In the desert his voice will be heard, proclaiming: 'Prepare for the Lord's coming; make the way ready for Him.'"

⁴In fulfilment of these prophetic words, John baptised people in a desert region. He preached a baptism, a complete cleansing from sin, when people turned away from a life of sin and sought God's forgiveness instead.

⁵His ministry had such impact that people from all over the country districts of Judea, as well as the city of Jerusalem, made the pilgrimage to the place where he was baptising. They confessed their sins before being baptised by him in the river Jordan.

⁶John's clothes were made of coarse camel's hair and he wore a leather belt around his waist. He ate a diet of locusts and wild honey. ⁷His message was straightforward: "Someone far more powerful than I am is coming after me. I am not worthy to do the work of a slave for Him, to even untie the thongs of His sandals. ⁸For I immerse you in water, but He will immerse you in God's Holy Spirit."

The beginning of Jesus' ministry (1:9-15)

⁹During this period, Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee to be baptised by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰As Jesus came out of the water, John saw the heavens above Him open and the Holy Spirit of God come upon Him like a dove. ¹¹A voice from heaven spoke, saying: "You are my Son, whom I love; I am very pleased with You."

¹²⁻¹³The first thing the Holy Spirit did was to send Jesus into the desert where He remained for forty days. During this time He was

subjected to temptations from Satan. But angels protected Him from the danger of wild animals.

¹⁴When John had been put into prison, Jesus returned to Galilee and began to preach openly the good news God had sent Him to proclaim. ¹⁵“It is time”, He said, “God’s Kingdom is now within your reach. Turn away from your lives of sin and believe the good news that you can have a new and better life!”

Disciples called to be ‘fishers of men’ (1:16-20)

¹⁶One day Jesus was walking on the shore of the Sea of Galilee when He saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing their nets into the water, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷Jesus called to them: “Come and follow Me and I will make you fishermen of a different kind; you will catch men!” ¹⁸Without hesitating, they abandoned their nets and followed Him.

¹⁹A little further along the shore He saw James and his brother John, the sons of Zebedee, preparing their nets. ²⁰He called them in the same way and they, too, did not hesitate to leave their father Zebedee, together with the hired men, and follow Jesus.

Authority of Jesus demonstrated (1:21-39)

²¹Together they all went to Capernaum where, on the Sabbath day, Jesus went to the synagogue and began to teach. ²²People were amazed at the authority with which He taught them, an authority the teachers of the religious law did not possess.

²³⁻²⁴While He was speaking, a man who belonged to the synagogue and who was in the grip of an evil spirit shouted out: “What do You want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Is it Your intention to destroy us? I know who You are. You are the Holy One God has sent!”

²⁵Jesus addressed him sternly: “Quiet! Come out of him!” ²⁶The evil spirit caused the man to have convulsions and came out of him with a great shriek. ²⁷All the people were astounded at this and began to question among themselves: “What are we to make of this? First we hear a new teaching with a greater authority than anything we have heard before. Then He issues commands to evil spirits and they obey Him!” ²⁸It was no wonder that the news about Jesus spread rapidly throughout the whole region of Galilee.

²⁹⁻³⁰From the synagogue they went directly with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew, who told Jesus that Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed, sick with a fever. ³¹So Jesus went to her and took her by the hand, helping her to her feet. Immediately the fever went and she was able to prepare a meal for them all.

³²That evening when the sun was set, people came from all over the town, bringing the sick and demon possessed to Jesus. ³³It seemed the whole town was at the door. ³⁴Jesus healed many from a whole variety of diseases. He also freed many who were in bondage to demonic powers. However, He would not permit the demons to speak because they knew He was God's Son.

³⁵It was very early on the next morning and still dark when Jesus got up and, leaving the house, went to an isolated spot where He could pray without being disturbed. ³⁶But Simon and the others went looking for Him. ³⁷When they found Jesus, they said: "Everyone is searching for You!"

³⁸Jesus replied, "We will go to the other villages in this area so I can preach there as well. This is the reason why I have come." ³⁹So He journeyed throughout Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and setting people free from demonic powers.

Leper healed by Jesus (1:40-45)

⁴⁰On one occasion, a leper came to Him, fell to his knees and pleaded with Jesus: "If You want to, You can make me clean."

⁴¹Jesus was immediately filled with compassion for the man. He reached out His hand, touched him and said: "Of course I want to heal you. Be cleansed." ⁴²Immediately the man was completely healed of the leprosy; no trace of it was left.

⁴³⁻⁴⁴Jesus dismissed him but first warned him strictly: "Make sure you do not tell anyone what I have done for you. Instead, go and show yourself to the priest to have your healing verified. Then go and make a sacrificial thank-offering as Moses commanded, as a public testimony." ⁴⁵But instead the man went and told everyone he met of the wonderful healing he had received. Consequently Jesus could not venture openly into any town; He would have been mobbed! Instead He remained outside the populated areas, but still people came to Him from everywhere.

Jesus heals and forgives a paralytic (2:1-12)

2 ¹⁻²Jesus returned to Capernaum a few days later. This became known and people gathered where He was staying; they were both inside and outside the house. No more could be packed in; and Jesus preached the gospel of the Kingdom to them. ³Four men arrived carrying a paralysed man. ⁴They could find no way of getting him close to Jesus, so they climbed onto the roof and made a hole in it, through which they lowered the paralysed man as he lay on his

mat. ⁵Jesus perceived that this was an act of true faith, so He said to the man: “My son, all your sins are forgiven.”

⁶⁻⁷Some teachers of the law were present and started muttering among themselves, questioning why Jesus should dare to say such a thing. To them this was blasphemy, for only God can forgive sins!

⁸Jesus was so spiritually sensitive that He knew precisely what they were thinking in their hearts and asked them: “Why do you think such things? ⁹Would it be easier to say to this paralysed man, ‘All your sins are forgiven’, or would you say, ‘Stand, pick up your mat and walk?’ ¹⁰⁻¹¹However, to prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins,” Jesus then addressed the paralysed man, “I tell you now, stand, pick up your mat and go home.” ¹²The man immediately stood, picked up his mat and walked out of the meeting before their eyes. Everyone was amazed and praised God saying: “Never have we seen anything like this!”

Matthew called to follow Jesus (2:13-17)

¹³Later, Jesus was beside the lake and again a large crowd gathered around Him; so He taught them. ¹⁴Afterwards, as He was walking along, He saw Levi, son of Alphaeus (otherwise known as Matthew), sitting at the place where he collected taxes from the people. Jesus simply said to him: “Follow me,” and immediately Levi obeyed; he left his tax collecting and followed Jesus.

¹⁵Many other tax collectors and notorious sinners were present later when Jesus had dinner at Levi’s house. Because such people were drawn by His teaching, they ate together with Jesus and His disciples. ¹⁶This outraged the Pharisees and the teachers of the religious law. When they saw Jesus eating with such people they asked His disciples: “Why does your Master eat with tax gatherers and sinners?”

¹⁷Overhearing what they said, Jesus answered: “It is the sick who need a doctor, not the healthy. I have come to call sinners to turn away from their sin. The truly righteous people have already done that!”

Jesus questioned about fasting (2:18-22)

¹⁸A time of fasting was being observed by John’s disciples and the Pharisees, but not by Jesus’ followers. So some people asked Jesus: “Why is it that the disciples who follow John and the Pharisees observe this fast, but Your disciples do not?”

¹⁹Jesus replied: “Would you expect the guests at a wedding feast to fast while the bridegroom was with them? They would not

dream of doing so! ²⁰ However, after the Bridegroom has been taken away from them, then My disciples will fast.

²¹ “You would not sew a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old piece of clothing. If you did, the new piece would shrink when washed and pull away from the older cloth, and you would end up with a worse tear than you had when you started. ²² Likewise, you would not pour new wine into old wineskins. No-one would think of doing such a thing because he knows that when it ferments, the new wine would cause the old hardened skin to burst, and then both the wine and the wineskin would be useless. No, you know well enough that you always pour new wine into new wine skins.”

Jesus’ authority greater than Sabbath rules (2:23-3:6)

²³ While Jesus was walking through a wheat field with His disciples one Sabbath, they picked some of the grains of wheat. ²⁴ This upset the Pharisees. “Look at them”, they said to Jesus. “Why do they do what is unlawful on the Sabbath?” For they regarded this as work!

²⁵ Jesus answered them: “What did David and his followers do when they were hungry and in need of food? Surely you have read these scriptures! ²⁶ When Abiathar was the high priest, David went into God’s house and dared to eat the consecrated bread that only the priests are allowed to eat. And he gave some of this bread to his men also.”

²⁷ Then Jesus taught them this principle: “God made the Sabbath for men’s benefit; He did not make man to be in bondage to the Sabbath. ²⁸ The Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath. His authority is much greater than your Sabbath rules!”

3 On another occasion, a man with a shrivelled hand was present when Jesus was in the synagogue. ² His opponents were always looking for some excuse to criticise Jesus, so they watched closely to see if He would heal the man on the Sabbath.

³ “Stand up here where everyone can see,” Jesus said to the man with the shrivelled hand. ⁴ Then Jesus turned to His detractors and asked them: “Do you think it is right according to God’s law to do good or to do evil on the Sabbath? Would you save a life or take it away?” They said nothing in reply.

⁵ Their stubbornness angered and upset Jesus deeply. “Stretch out your hand,” He said to the man. When he obeyed, his hand was healed completely. ⁶ The Pharisees were furious and went to the supporters of Herod to plot with them how they could kill Jesus.

Demons recognise and submit to Jesus (3:7-12)

⁷Together with His disciples, Jesus went to the lakeside, followed by a large crowd. ⁸Because of the things He was doing, His reputation was spreading widely; many people came to Him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea and even as far as the area on the other side of the Jordan and the region around Tyre and Sidon.

⁹To stop the people from crushing Him, Jesus told His disciples to position a small boat from which He could speak to everyone.

¹⁰The problem was the direct result of all those He was healing, for others wanted to push through the crowd to touch Him personally.

¹¹When those demonised by evil spirits saw Jesus, they fell down before Him shouting: "You are God's Son." ¹²So He commanded them with great firmness that they were to be quiet and not reveal who He was.

Twelve apostles appointed (3:13-19)

¹³On another occasion, Jesus took His closest disciples onto the side of a mountain. ¹⁴⁻¹⁵He then appointed twelve of them to be apostles, those who would be with Him consistently and who He could send out to preach the gospel of God's Kingdom, with the authority to free people from the demonic spirits that oppose that Kingdom.

¹⁶⁻¹⁷The twelve He appointed were Simon, who also became known as Peter, James and his brother John, the sons of Zebedee, to whom Jesus gave the name 'sons of thunder'. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹Also Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon who belonged to the party of zealots and Judas Iscariot who betrayed Him.

Jesus accused of being possessed (3:20-30)

²⁰Later, when Jesus and His disciples went to a house for a meal, they could not eat because so many people crowded into the place.

²¹Members of His family heard of this and came to intervene, saying: "This whole thing is getting out of hand. He must be out of His mind."

²²The teachers of the law, who had come to Galilee from Jerusalem, said far worse things: "He is possessed by the devil; this is why He can drive out demons, for they have to submit to the prince of demons."

²³So Jesus addressed the people directly, using analogies: "How can it be possible for Satan to drive himself out? ²⁴Any kingdom divided against itself cannot last. ²⁵The same is true of any group

of people; where there is division they cannot prevail. ²⁶So if Satan is opposing himself, that is the end of him; his dominion cannot last.

²⁷“The truth is that it is not possible for anyone to enter the house belonging to a strong man to rob him of his possessions unless he first binds up the strong man. Only then can he rob his house. ²⁸I tell you the truth, every sin and blasphemy that people have committed will be forgiven when they repent. ²⁹However, anyone who curses the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; his sin is eternal and his guilt will remain.”

³⁰Jesus said this in response to their accusation that an evil spirit was working through Him.

Jesus’ true family (3:31-35)

³¹⁻³²At this point, Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived at the scene. Being outside because of the crowd, they had a message passed to those who were close to Him: “Your mother and brothers are outside waiting for You.”

³³“Who are My mother and brothers?” Jesus asked. ³⁴Then He looked at those seated around Him and said: “These are My mother and brothers. ³⁵Anyone who does God’s will is My brother and sister and mother!”

Parable of the sower (4:1-20)

4 Later, Jesus was again teaching by the lake and the usual large crowd gathered around Him, so large that He had to sit in a boat as He spoke while all the people listened on the lake-shore. ²He used many parables, vivid illustrations, to explain God’s Kingdom to them.

³On this occasion He said: “Listen closely to Me! It was time for a farmer to sow his seed. ⁴As he scattered the seed, some of it fell on the path where the birds quickly devoured it. ⁵Other seed fell on rocky ground where there was little soil. ⁶At first it seemed to take root, but the young shoots were quickly scorched by the sun’s heat and ruined, because the shallowness of the soil prevented the seed from being deeply rooted.

⁷“Other seed fell among thorns. Even though the good seed began to grow, it was choked by the growth of the weeds, so that it never survived for the harvest. ⁸However, some of the seed the sower scattered fell on good soil. The seed grew and ripened so that it multiplied, producing a crop thirty, sixty, even a hundred times what was sown.”

⁹Then Jesus added: "Let the one who has ears open to the truth hear what I am saying."

¹⁰Later, the twelve disciples and their friends came to Jesus when He was alone and asked Him why He used such parables when He spoke. ¹¹⁻¹²He told them: "The secret about God's Kingdom is given to you because you believe in Me. But I always use parables because those who do not believe in Me are as those described in the prophecy which says, 'They are always looking, but never seeing the answer. They listen but never understand what is said. If they were able to receive the revelation given, they would turn to God and be forgiven!'" "

¹³Then Jesus challenged them: "Are you saying that you do not understand the parable that I gave about the sowing of the seed? I will explain it to you. ¹⁴The seed the farmer sows is the Word about God's Kingdom. ¹⁵Some people are like the path where some of the seed falls. They hear what is said, but Satan immediately steals the Word so that it does not take root in their hearts. ¹⁶Others are like rocky soil. They hear the Word and their immediate response is a joyful one. ¹⁷But the joy is short-lived because the Word does not take deep root in their hearts. So as things become difficult, or they are persecuted, they give up. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹The thorny soil where other seeds fell represents those who seem to receive the Word of truth, but there are other things that they allow to grow in their lives and these choke the revelation of God's Kingdom, such things as anxiety, trusting in material wealth and possessions and the natural sinful desires to please self. So the revelation of the truth never ripens and come to fruitfulness in their lives.

²⁰However, those represented by the good soil not only hear the Word, they believe it and put it into practice; so they enjoy a harvest in their lives. They are able to multiply what was sown in their hearts, thirty, sixty, even a hundred times over!"

Analogy of a lamp (4:21-25)

²¹Jesus also asked them: "Do you place a lamp under the bed or somewhere hidden? Of course not; you put it in a prominent place where it can give light. ²²Whatever is hidden is only waiting to be discovered; something concealed will become revealed. ²³Let the one who has ears open to the truth, hear what I am saying."

²⁴Jesus added: "Be very careful what you listen to. For here is another spiritual principle: whatever you do, the same will be measured back to you. ²⁵The one who has My life will be given still more; but whoever does not have that life, whatever he does have will be taken from him."

Parable of growing seed (4:26-29)

²⁶⁻²⁷ Jesus spoke further about God's Kingdom in this way: "God's Kingdom develops like this: When a man scatters seed on the ground, it sprouts and grows night and day whether he sleeps or is awake. ²⁸ The natural growth process is taking place irrespective of what he does. First you see the stalk growing out of the soil, then the head develops and finally the full grain in the head. ²⁹ When it is ripe it is time to harvest the crop."

Parable of a mustard seed (4:30-34)

³⁰ Jesus used another illustration: "How can we describe God's Kingdom; what parable can we use? ³¹⁻³² God's reign can be likened to a mustard seed. Although it is only a tiny seed, when planted it grows into such a large plant that birds come and perch in its branches and shelter under it."

³³ Jesus used many similar parables when He spoke to the people, describing how God's Kingdom could grow within and among them. ³⁴ He always used these illustrations to help their limited understanding. To His disciples He explained everything clearly, but only when alone with them.

Calming of the storm (4:35-41)

³⁵ On the evening of that same day, Jesus told His disciples that they would cross to the other side of the lake. ³⁶ So leaving the crowd, they took Jesus with them in one of the boats. ³⁷ A sudden storm arose and the waves began to break over the side of the boat, causing it almost to sink. ³⁸ Jesus was sleeping on a cushion in the stern, but in panic the disciples woke Him: "We are drowning, teacher; don't You care?"

³⁹ Jesus stood up and commanded the wind and waves: "Quiet! Be still!" Immediately the wind died down and the sea was completely calm.

⁴⁰ "Why are you afraid?" He asked the disciples. "Is your faith still so weak?"

⁴¹ They were in such awe that all they could do was question among themselves: "Who can this be? He commands even the wind and the waves and they obey Him!"

Demons cast into herd of pigs (5:1-13)

5 They crossed the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. ² A man in bondage to an evil spirit came from among the tombs, where he lived, to meet Jesus as soon as He landed. ³ Nobody could control

this man. Even if people bound him with chains he would tear them off. ⁴They had often chained his hands and feet, but to no avail; no one was strong enough to control him. ⁵He lived among the tombs or in the hills by day and night, often crying out desperately and cutting himself with stones.

⁶Seeing Jesus in the distance, he ran to meet Him and threw himself down on his knees before Him. ⁷Then he shouted with all his might: "Jesus, Son of the Most High God, what are You going to do to me? Swear to God that You will not torture me!"

⁸He said this because Jesus was already addressing the evil spirit in the man: "Come out of him, you foul spirit!"

⁹Jesus asked the man his name. He replied: "My name is Legion, for I am possessed by many demons." ¹⁰He kept pleading with Jesus not to send these evil spirits anywhere else. ¹¹⁻¹²Instead the demons begged Jesus to send them into a large herd of pigs that was feeding on a hillside nearby, and Jesus agreed to this. ¹³The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, who then rushed down the hillside into the lake where they drowned. There were about two thousand of them.

Delivered man testifies to many (5:14-24)

¹⁴The swine-herds ran off and told people in the town and surrounding area what Jesus had done. Many went to see for themselves what had happened. ¹⁵When they arrived at the place, they saw Jesus together with the man now liberated from the legion of demons that had possessed him. He was sitting calmly in his right mind and was now dressed properly. The people were awestruck.

¹⁶Those who had witnessed what had taken place told them how the demon-possessed man had been set free by Jesus, and how the demons had entered the pigs instead. ¹⁷Out of fear, the people begged Him to leave the area.

¹⁸As Jesus was boarding the boat, the man who had been set free pleaded to be allowed to go with Him. ¹⁹Jesus did not agree to this, but told him: "Go home, and tell your family about all the Lord has done to set you free because He had mercy on you." ²⁰The man did as Jesus said and began to travel around the area of the Ten Towns telling people about all Jesus had done for him. Everyone who heard his testimony was amazed.

²¹Jesus again crossed the lake by boat and, as usual, a large crowd gathered as soon as He landed. ²²⁻²³Among the people was one of the synagogue leaders called Jairus. As soon as he saw Jesus he came

and fell at His feet and desperately pleaded with Him: “My little daughter is dying. Please come and lay Your hands on her, for then she will be healed and will live.” So Jesus went with him.

Woman healed by touching his garment (5:25-34)

²⁴A large crowd followed and were pushing and shoving from all sides, out of a desire to be near Jesus. ²⁵Among them was a woman who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶She had spent all her money on doctors to try to alleviate her suffering, but all to no avail; the problem had only become worse. ²⁷⁻²⁸Having heard about Jesus, she pushed her way through the crowd, came up behind Him and touched His clothing because she thought, ‘To touch His clothes will be enough; I will then be healed.’ ²⁹Sure enough, as soon as she touched Him the bleeding stopped and she knew that her body was healed and her suffering ended.

³⁰When she touched Him, Jesus knew that power had flowed out of Him. He turned around and asked those nearest Him in the crowd: “Who touched my clothes?”

³¹His disciples said: “You can see how many are pushing and shoving to be near You. Why do You ask such a question, so many are trying to touch You?”

³²Jesus would not be deterred but kept looking round to see who had touched Him, not just physically but with faith. ³³The woman, knowing she had been healed, came forward and fell on her knees before Jesus, afraid that He would be displeased. She told Him truthfully what she had done and why.

³⁴Jesus was not angry or upset. Far from it, for He said to her: “My daughter, you are healed because you showed such faith. You can go in peace and remain free, for your days of suffering are over.”

Jairus’ daughter raised to life (5:35-43)

³⁵During this conversation, some members of Jairus’ household arrived with the news that the synagogue leader’s daughter had died. “There is no point in troubling the teacher any further,” they said.

³⁶Ignoring this, Jesus said to Jairus: “There is no cause to be afraid; continue to believe.”

³⁷Now Jesus would not allow any of the crowd to follow Him; He took only Peter, James and John with Him. ³⁸By the time they arrived at Jairus’ house there was already a great noise caused by people crying and mourning.

³⁹Jesus went into the house and asked them: “Why are you making all this noise? The child is only asleep; she is not dead.” But they only laughed at Him for they knew the girl had certainly died.

⁴⁰He told them all to leave the house; then He took the child’s parents together with His three disciples into the child’s room. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her: “Little child, I say to you get up!” ⁴²The girl stood up immediately and walked around, for she was about twelve years old. ⁴³All present were amazed, but Jesus gave strict instructions not to tell anyone about how this had happened. He told them to give the girl something to eat.

A prophet without honour (6:1-6)

6 Jesus then left that place to return to His home town, Nazareth, together with His disciples. ²He taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath and those who heard Him were amazed at what He said.

“Where did He learn all these things?” they asked. “He has been given such great wisdom. And look at the miracles He performs!” ³But He is only the carpenter’s son, isn’t He? He is Mary’s son and we know His brothers James, Joseph, Judas and Simon, and His sisters as well.” So they chose to be offended by Him, instead of believing in Him.

⁴Jesus told them: “A prophet is not honoured in his own town or by his relatives, even his own family.” ⁵⁻⁶Because they rejected Him, Jesus was unable to perform many miraculous works there. A few were healed because He laid hands on them, but Jesus was amazed and saddened by the unbelief of the majority of the people.

Twelve sent out in pairs (6:7-13)

So Jesus then travelled from village to village teaching. ⁷He sent out the twelve disciples in pairs, having given them authority over the evil spirits that put people into bondage. ⁸He gave them these instructions: “Take only the bare essentials for your journey. You will not need to take food, baggage or money. ⁹You will have the clothes and sandals you stand up in, and they will prove sufficient. ¹⁰Stay in the same house until you leave that place. ¹¹However, if you come to a place where people will not welcome you and who reject what you say, shake the dust of that place off your feet when you leave, as a witness against them.”

¹²The twelve disciples went, preaching everywhere that people should repent of their sins and turn to God. ¹³They drove out demons from many people and anointed the sick with oil, and they were healed.

Account of John the Baptist's death (6:14-29)

¹⁴King Herod heard of what was happening, for Jesus' reputation was now widespread. Some suggested: "This must be John the Baptist back from the dead; this is why He has such miraculous powers working through Him."

¹⁵Others thought that He was the prophet Elijah. And still others said that He was a prophet like those who had lived centuries before. ¹⁶Herod himself said: "He must be John raised from the dead, the man I beheaded."

¹⁷⁻¹⁸It was on Herod's orders that John had been arrested, bound and thrown into prison. Herod had married Herodias, who had been his brother Philip's wife, an action that John denounced, telling Herod: "It is not lawful for you to marry your brother's wife."

¹⁹Herodias, seized with anger against John, wanted to kill him. ²⁰Herod would not agree to this because he was actually afraid of John. He thought it better to protect him, for he recognised that he was a righteous and holy man of God. He would listen to what John said with interest, but without understanding.

²¹To celebrate his birthday, Herod gave a banquet for the state officials, military commanders and the leaders from Galilee. This provided Herodias with the opportunity she had been longing for. ²²Her daughter danced for the assembled guests and this pleased them and Herod so much that he said to her: "You can ask me for anything you want and I promise to grant your wish. ²³Yes, I swear to that. Even if you ask me for half my kingdom, I will give it to you."

²⁴The girl went and asked her mother: "What shall I ask for?" Herodias answered: "The head of John the Baptist."

²⁵The girl quickly returned to Herod with her request: "I want you to give me the head of John the Baptist on a dish – immediately!"

²⁶This caused the king great distress, but as he had made an oath in front of the dinner guests, he could hardly refuse the girl's request. ²⁷⁻²⁸So he ordered that John be executed immediately and his head brought on a dish. The executioner went and beheaded John in the prison and returned with the head on a dish, as ordered. He gave it to the girl who in turn gave it to her mother.

²⁹When they heard what had happened, John's disciples came for his body and laid it in a tomb.

Jesus continues to teach (6:30-34)

³⁰When the apostles returned to Jesus, they told Him what they had taught and the things they had done. ³¹As usual, many people were

coming and going so that Jesus and the disciples did not have time to eat. So Jesus said to them: “Come with me by yourselves. We will go somewhere quiet together to rest.”

³²So Jesus and the twelve went by boat and headed for a lonely place. ³³However, many in the crowd saw them leave and ran around the edge of the lake to arrive before they did. They came from all the towns in the area.

³⁴When Jesus landed, there was already a large crowd awaiting Him. Seeing them, His heart went out to them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd to care for them. Moved with this compassion, He taught them many truths.

Feeding of the five thousand (6:35-44)

³⁵By now it was getting late, so His disciples came to Jesus and said: “This is such a remote place and it is now very late. ³⁶Why not send the people away so they can find something to eat in the villages in the surrounding area.”

³⁷“You give them something to eat yourselves,” replied Jesus.

“That would require a vast amount of money, at least a man’s wages for many months,” the disciples said. “Are you suggesting that we should go and buy all that bread for them so they can eat?”

³⁸“Go and see how many loaves you have already,” Jesus told them.

After searching, they found that the total was only five loaves, and two small fish.

³⁹⁻⁴⁰So Jesus told the disciples to make all the people sit down on the ground in groups of a hundred or fifty. ⁴¹Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, looked towards heaven and gave thanks to God over them. He then broke the loaves in pieces and gave them to the disciples to distribute among the people. He did the same with the two fish.

⁴²⁻⁴³Everyone ate as much as he or she wanted before the disciples collected the remaining pieces of bread and fish, filling twelve baskets.

⁴⁴The number of men alone who had eaten was five thousand!

Jesus walks on the lake (6:45-52)

⁴⁵Then Jesus told the disciples to return to the boat at once and go ahead of Him to Bethsaida, while He sent the crowd of people away.

⁴⁶When He had done so, Jesus then walked up the mountainside to find a suitable place to pray alone.

⁴⁷By evening He was still on land while the disciples’ boat was in the middle of the lake. ⁴⁸⁻⁴⁹He could see that they were struggling to

row against the strong headwind. In the early hours of the morning Jesus walked on the lake in their direction. It seemed that He was going to walk straight past them, but the disciples saw Him. Thinking this must be a ghost, they cried out in fear.

⁵⁰Jesus called to them immediately: "Have courage all of you. It is I; don't be afraid!" ⁵¹As soon as He climbed into the boat to be with them, the wind died down. The disciples were awestruck. ⁵²They had failed to understand from the multiplication of the loaves that they were now experiencing the miraculous. They still did not expect the supernatural, their minds were so conditioned by natural thinking.

Many healed at Gennesaret (6:53-56)

⁵³Having crossed the lake they landed at Gennesaret where they anchored the boat. ⁵⁴No sooner had they landed than people recognised Jesus. They ran throughout the area with the news. ⁵⁵⁻⁵⁶So people came from the entire region bringing the sick with them on mats to whatever village, town or country area where Jesus happened to be. They would place the sick in the market places, desperate that they should be able to touch just the edge of His clothing. And all who touched Him were healed!

What comes out of a man makes him unclean (7:1-23)

7 Some Pharisees and teachers of the law came from Jerusalem to confront Jesus. ²They noticed that some of His disciples ate food without washing their hands in the ritual way; so they were considered 'unclean'. ³It should be explained that the Pharisees and other Jews washed their hands in a ceremonial way before they ate, as this is the tradition of their elders. ⁴When they come in from work, or even shopping, they never eat unless they wash first. (In fact they keep many such traditions including the washing of cups, jugs and kettles.)

⁵So these Pharisees and teachers of the law told Jesus: "Your disciples should live by the traditions of the elders, instead of eating with unclean hands! Why don't they?"

⁶Jesus replied: "Isaiah prophesied correctly about you hypocrites when he wrote: 'These people honour Me with what they say, but there is no honour for Me in their hearts. ⁷So their worship is futile and their teachings only a load of rules made up by men.'

⁸“Do you see where you have gone wrong? You have replaced God’s commands with a series of your own traditions. ⁹You are intent on keeping your own traditions instead of God’s Word! ¹⁰For example, Moses said, ‘Honour your father and your mother;’ he also said, ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death!’ ¹¹But you have replaced these words with your own teaching. You suggest a person can say to his parents, ‘What I might have given to help you, I have devoted to God instead!’ ¹²Consequently you say he has to do nothing to help his father or mother.

¹³“This is typical of the way you cancel out God’s Word by believing instead your own traditions, handed down through the generations. Yes, you do this in many ways.”

¹⁴Then Jesus called to the crowd to listen to what He said: “Listen to me all of you and understand what I say clearly to you. ¹⁵A man cannot be made unclean by anything outside of him. No, it is what comes from within him that makes him unclean and causes him to sin.”

¹⁷After teaching the crowd, Jesus entered the house and His disciples asked Him about what He had just said. ¹⁸“Are you so lacking in understanding?” Jesus said. “Isn’t it obvious that nothing that enters a man from outside makes him unclean in God’s eyes? ¹⁹The food he eats goes into his stomach, not his heart. In due course it passes out of his body.” (From this, it was obvious that Jesus declared all foods to be ‘clean’ and therefore permissible to eat.)

²⁰⁻²²Jesus continued to explain: “It is what comes out of a man, from his own heart, that makes him unclean, such things as evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deception, lust, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. ²³These evils start in a person’s heart and these are what make him unclean before God.”

Gentile woman’s faith honoured (7:24-30)

²⁴Jesus journeyed on to the area of Tyre and Sidon, where He could stay without this becoming public knowledge; but it was impossible to keep His presence secret. ²⁵⁻²⁶There was a Greek woman born in Syrian Phoenicia whose small daughter was demonised. She discovered where Jesus was staying and came and fell at His feet, begging Jesus to set her daughter free from the demon within her.

²⁷Jesus replied: “First the children should eat what they want, for it is not right to throw the children’s bread to the dogs.”

²⁸“I agree, Lord,” the woman replied, “but even the dogs under the table are allowed to eat the children’s crumbs.”

²⁹“For such a faith response, you may go,” Jesus told her. “The demon has now left your daughter.”

³⁰The woman returned home to find her child lying on the bed, the demon gone.

Deaf and dumb man healed (7:31-37)

³¹Jesus then left the area of Tyre, travelled through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee and then into the region of the Ten Towns. ³²While there, a deaf man who was barely able to speak was brought to Him by some people. They pleaded with Jesus to lay hands on the man to heal him.

³³Jesus took him to one side away from the crowd. First He put His fingers into the man’s ears. Next, He placed some of His spittle on the man’s tongue. ³⁴Then He looked toward heaven, sighed deeply and said to the man: “Be opened.” ³⁵Immediately the man’s ears were opened and he could hear; his tongue was released and he could speak clearly.

³⁶⁻³⁷Jesus ordered the people not to tell anyone of this. But no matter what He said, they kept telling everyone about such things that Jesus did, causing great amazement among the people. They said of Him: “Everything He does, He does well. He even enables the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak!”

Jesus feeds 4000 (8:1-9)

8 During His time there, another large crowd gathered and had nothing to eat. Jesus gathered His disciples around Him and said: ²“I feel great compassion for all these people; for three days they have been here with Me without anything to eat. ³If I send them away now they will collapse on the way home for lack of nourishment, for some have travelled far to be here.”

⁴“But where in a remote place like this could we buy enough bread to feed them?” His disciples asked.

⁵“How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked them.

“Seven,” they replied.

⁶Telling the people to sit on the ground, Jesus then took the seven loaves and gave thanks to God over them. He broke them and gave the pieces to the disciples to distribute among the people. ⁷They also had a few small fish. Jesus gave thanks for them and told the

disciples to share them out among the people. ⁸Everyone ate as much as he wanted. Then the disciples filled seven baskets with the remaining pieces. ⁹About four thousand men were present and had been fed.

Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod (8:10-21)

¹⁰Then Jesus dismissed the crowd and went with His disciples by boat to the region of Dalmanutha. ¹¹Again, Pharisees came to ask Jesus testing questions. They wanted Him to perform some heavenly sign to prove who He was. ¹²Jesus sighed deeply and asked: “Why does this generation want a miraculous sign? I tell you emphatically, that no such sign will be given to it.” ¹³Then Jesus left them, returned to the boat and crossed to the other side of the lake.

¹⁴The disciples had forgotten to bring food. They had only one loaf with them in the boat. ¹⁵Jesus warned them: “Be careful of the yeast of the Pharisees and of Herod.”

¹⁶They discussed among themselves what Jesus meant, concluding that it must be something to do with their lack of bread. ¹⁷Aware of what they were saying, Jesus asked: “Why do you talk about your lack of bread? Are you still unable to understand? Are your hearts so hardened to the truth? ¹⁸Are you guilty of having eyes yet you fail to see, and ears yet you fail to hear? ¹⁹Don’t you remember what happened when I fed the five thousand with five loaves? How many baskets full of the remnants did you pick up then?”

“Twelve,” they replied.

²⁰“What about when I fed the four thousand with some loaves? How many baskets did you fill then?”

“Seven,” they replied.

²¹“Do you still not understand?” Jesus said to them.

Blind man healed (8:22-26)

²²They arrived at Bethsaida where some people brought a blind man, pleading with Jesus to heal him. ²³He took the man by the hand and led him outside the village. He placed some of His spittle on the man’s eyes, laid His hands on him and asked: “Are you able to see?”

²⁴The man looked up and said: “I can see people, but they are walking around looking like trees.”

²⁵Jesus again placed His hands over the man’s eyes. When he opened them, he could see perfectly; his sight was totally restored.

²⁶Jesus told him to go straight home without going into the village.

Christ the Messiah, God's Son (8:27-30)

²⁷Jesus and His disciples continued on their way to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. There He asked them: "What are the people saying about Me? Who do they think I am?"

²⁸They replied: "Some say You are John the Baptist; others think You are Elijah and others say You must be one of the prophets."

²⁹"What about you; who do you say I am?" Jesus asked them.

"You are the Christ, the Messiah, God's Son," Peter answered.

³⁰Then Jesus warned them not to reveal His true identity to anyone else.

Jesus predicts His death (8:31)

³¹Now they knew for certain who He was, Jesus began to teach them that the Son of Man would have to suffer many things. He would be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law. It would even be necessary for Him to be killed, but He would rise again on the third day afterwards. What He said was very clear.

Jesus rebukes Peter (8:32-33)

³²But Peter took Him to one side and dared to rebuke Him; he could not believe such things would happen to Jesus.

³³Jesus turned towards the disciples and then rebuked Peter: "Get behind me Satan!" He said. "You have nothing to do with the truth of God, only with sinful men."

The cost of following Jesus (8:34-9:1)

³⁴Then Jesus addressed the crowd as well as the disciples, saying: "Anyone who wants to be a follower of Mine will have to deny himself and be prepared to take up his own cross of sacrifice for the gospel. Then, and only then, will he be able to follow Me. ³⁵For anyone who is intent on saving his own life will actually lose it. But whoever is prepared to give his life wholeheartedly for Me and for the gospel, he is the one who will enjoy salvation. ³⁶What is the use of accumulating riches and all that this world offers, if in the process you lose your own soul? ³⁷What can you possibly give in exchange for your soul? ³⁸I tell you, this is an adulterous and sinful generation; if anyone is ashamed to bear witness about Me and what I say in this generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes again in His Father's glory together with His angels."

9 Then Jesus added: “I tell you the truth, some of you here today will know that God’s Kingdom has come into your lives with power before you die.”

The Transfiguration (9:2-10)

²Six days later, Jesus took Peter, James and John up a high mountain where they could be alone together. Suddenly He was transfigured before their eyes. ³His clothes shone brilliantly, whiter and brighter than any natural bleach could effect. ⁴Elijah and Moses appeared with Jesus and were talking with Him.

⁵Hardly knowing what to say, Peter blurted out: “Rabbi, it is so wonderful for us to be here. Let us erect three canopies – one for You and one each for Moses and Elijah.” ⁶They felt really frightened.

⁷Then a cloud fell and enfolded them, and a voice spoke from the cloud: “This is my Son, who I love greatly. Listen to what He says!”

⁸Suddenly the cloud disappeared and only Jesus was standing there alone. ⁹As they came down from the mountain, Jesus warned them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰So they told no one, but discussed among themselves what ‘rising from the dead’ meant.

Disciples question Jesus about Elijah (9:11-13)

¹¹They asked Jesus: “Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come before the Messiah comes?”

¹²Jesus replied: “This is right, Elijah does come first, so that everything might be restored, to call people back to God. ¹³I tell you clearly that Elijah has already come and they did to him what they wanted, as was predicted about him. Why then is it also written that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected?”

Boy delivered from an evil spirit (9:14-29)

¹⁴When they joined the other disciples, they saw that a large crowd had gathered around them and the teachers of the law were arguing with them. ¹⁵When the people saw Jesus approaching they ran to meet Him, overcome with joy.

¹⁶“What is the argument about?” He asked. ¹⁷A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought my son to You. He is possessed by a spirit that has struck him dumb. ¹⁸At times he is thrown to the ground by the seizures he has. He foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth and his joints become rigid. As You were not here, I asked Your disciples to drive the evil spirit out of the boy but they have been unable to do so.”

¹⁹“What an unbelieving generation this is!” said Jesus. “How much longer must I stay with you? How much longer do I have to put up with your unbelief? Bring the boy here to Me.”

²⁰They did so, but as soon as the spirit in the boy saw Jesus it immediately threw him into a seizure. He fell to the ground and rolled from side to side, foaming at the mouth. ²¹“How long has he suffered like this?” Jesus asked the boy’s father.

²²“Since he was a small child,” he answered. “This foul spirit has tried to kill him by throwing him into the fire and drowning him in water. But if You can do anything to help him, please have mercy on us.”

²³“If I can?” said Jesus. “When you believe, everything becomes possible.”

²⁴The boy’s father replied straight away: “I do believe; help me to overcome any unbelief I have!”

²⁵When Jesus saw all the attention this situation was attracting, He rebuked the evil spirit: “You deaf and dumb spirit, I command you to come out of him and never return.”

²⁶The spirit in the boy shrieked, caused him to have a violent seizure and then left him. At first the boy lay so still he appeared to be dead. Some thought he had died. ²⁷But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him to his feet and he stood up, completely free.

²⁸When Jesus had gone indoors where it was private, the disciples asked him: “Why did we fail to drive the spirit out of the boy?”

²⁹Jesus replied: “This kind of spirit will only obey you when you pray with faith.”

Jesus spends time with His disciples (9:30-50)

³⁰⁻³¹They then left that place and journeyed through Galilee. Jesus did not want others to know where they were because He needed some time alone with the disciples in order to teach them. He told them: “The Son of Man will be betrayed and handed over to those who will kill Him; but on the third day He will rise back to life.”

³²But they still did not understand what He meant by such words, and were afraid to question Him further.

³³When they were in the house at Capernaum, Jesus asked His disciples: “What were you arguing about on the way here?” ³⁴No one wanted to answer Him, for they had been arguing about who among them was the greatest.

³⁵Jesus sat down and gathered them around Him and said: “If you want to be the first, then you must be prepared to be the last, everyone else’s servant.” Then Jesus stood a young child among

them. ³⁶He took the child in His arms and told them: ³⁷“Whoever welcomes a little child in My Name welcomes Me; and whoever welcomes Me welcomes not only Me, but also the Father who sent Me.”

³⁸John said: “Teacher, we saw a man who was driving demons out of people in Your Name. As he was not one of us we told him to stop.”

³⁹“No, don’t stop him,” Jesus said. “Anyone who performs a miracle in My Name cannot immediately afterwards say anything bad about Me. ⁴⁰If someone is not against us, he is for us. ⁴¹I tell you the truth, a person only has to give you a cup of water in My Name because you belong to Me, and he will certainly not lose the reward coming to him.

⁴²“On the other hand, if anyone causes a little child who believes in Me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck. ⁴³You may as well cut your hand off if it causes you to sin. For it would be better to enter eternal life maimed, than to go to hell with two hands. There the fire is never extinguished. ⁴⁵Similarly, if your foot is the problem leading you into sin, cut that off. It is better to enter eternal life as a cripple than to be thrown into hell with two feet. ⁴⁷And if your eye leads you to sin, it would be better to pluck it out and enter God’s Kingdom with one eye, rather than be thrown into hell with two eyes. ⁴⁸It is written about hell that there the worms do not die, and the fire is never extinguished.

⁴⁹“The refining fire is better than the fire of judgment! That refining fire is like salt. ⁵⁰Salt is useful, but if it loses its taste what good is it? You cannot restore its saltiness. So have the salt of God’s refining within yourselves and live at peace, in unity with one another.”

Pharisees question Jesus about divorce (10:1-12)

10 Jesus then went first to Judea and then across the Jordan River. As usual, crowds of people flocked to Him and He taught them the gospel. ²Again, the Pharisees also came to try to catch Him out with tricky questions: “Is it right, according to God’s law, for a man to divorce his wife?” they asked.

³“What command did Moses give you?” Jesus replied.

⁴“Moses allows a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send his wife away,” they said.

⁵Jesus told them: “Moses only wrote that law because of the hardness of your hearts. ⁶From the beginning God created male and

female. ⁷This is why when a man leaves his father and mother he becomes one with his wife. ⁸They are no longer two, but have become one because of their fleshly union. ⁹So if God has joined them together in such a way, no one had better separate them!"

¹⁰Later, when they were on their own with Jesus, the disciples questioned Him further about this matter. ¹¹Jesus explained: "If any-one divorces his wife and marries another woman he commits adultery against his wife. ¹²Likewise, if the wife divorces her husband and marries another man, she also commits adultery!"

Become like children to inherit the Kingdom (10:13-16)

¹³People brought small children to Jesus to be blessed by Him, but the disciples tried to prevent them. ¹⁴This annoyed Jesus and He told them: "Allow these little ones to come to Me; don't try to stop them, for God's Kingdom belongs to those who know they are little children before God. ¹⁵I tell you most emphatically, unless anyone receives the gift of God's Kingdom like a little child, he will never enter it at all."

¹⁶Then He took the children in His arms, laid His hands on them and blessed them.

A rich man talks to Jesus (10:17-25)

¹⁷Just as Jesus was starting His journey, a man ran to Him and fell on his knees before Him, saying: "Good teacher, please tell me what I must do in order to receive eternal life."

¹⁸Jesus answered him: "Why do you call Me good? No one is truly good apart from God Himself. ¹⁹You know the commandments He has given: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not testify falsely, do not defraud others, honour your father and mother.'" "

²⁰"Teacher, since boyhood I have kept all these commands," the man said.

²¹Jesus looked at him with love; His heart went out to him. Gently, He said: "You lack one thing. If you go and sell everything you have and give generously to the poor, you will store up for yourself treasure in heaven. Then you will be free to come and follow Me."

²²The man looked crestfallen. He went away sad because he was very wealthy. ²³Jesus turned and said to His disciples: "It is so hard for the rich to enter God's Kingdom!"

²⁴Jesus could see this stunned them, so He repeated: "Children, this is true. It is very hard for the wealthy to enter God's Kingdom.

²⁵In fact, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter God's Kingdom!"

An eternal reward (10:26-31)

²⁶This amazed the disciples even more and they began to question among themselves: "If this is the case then who can be saved?"

²⁷Jesus looked straight at them and said: "It is impossible for any man to save himself, but it is not impossible for God; everything is possible for Him!"

²⁸"We have given up everything in order to follow You!" Peter said to Jesus.

²⁹⁻³⁰He replied: "I tell you the truth, there is not a person who has left his home or brother or sisters, mother or father, his children, his land and possessions for Me and the gospel, who will not fail to receive back a hundred times as much as he has given in this life – homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, land and property. And in the age that is to come he will also enjoy eternal life. ³¹But many, who in this life appear to have everything, will in the end have nothing; and those who have given up everything shall possess everything eternally!"

The cup of suffering (10:32-40)

³²⁻³³They continued on their way to Jerusalem. Jesus walked in front and the disciples followed behind Him, still astounded at what He was teaching. Some of His followers were really afraid of the implications of what He said.

Jesus took the twelve aside and warned them again of what had to happen to Him: "We are now going to Jerusalem and there the Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Roman authorities. ³⁴They will mock Him, spit on Him, flog Him and then kill Him. However, on the third day He will rise back to life."

³⁵Later James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus with a request: "Teacher, would You do for us whatever we ask of You?"

³⁶"What do you want Me to do for you?" Jesus asked.

³⁷"When You come into Your glory, let us sit on either side of You," they replied.

³⁸Jesus told them: "You don't understand the implications of what you are asking. Are you able to drink the same cup of sacrifice that I drink? Can you be immersed in the kind of rejection and suffering that will immerse me?"

³⁹“Yes, we can. We are willing to do that,” they answered.

Jesus told them: “Yes, you will have to drink the cup I drink; you will have to sacrifice yourselves for My sake. And even as I must suffer so you will be immersed in suffering, the cost of your faithfulness. ⁴⁰However, it is not My prerogative to decide who should sit either side of Me in the glory that is to come. Those places have already been prepared for those to whom they are assigned.”

Leaders to have servant hearts (10:41-45)

⁴¹The other ten disciples were indignant with James and John when they heard about their request. ⁴²So Jesus called them all together and told them: “You know well that those who are thought of as leaders among the nations rule with oppression. The leading officials exalt themselves and suppress the people. ⁴³⁻⁴⁴This is not how you are to lead or rule; you belong to God’s Kingdom. No, those of you who want to become leaders must have servant hearts; those who want the highest positions must live as devoted slaves of God. ⁴⁵For even I, the Son of Man, did not come to be served by others, but to serve them and to give My life for them in order that by My sacrifice many would be able to belong to God eternally.”

Blind Bartimaeus healed (10:46-52)

⁴⁶Jesus and His disciples visited Jericho. As they left the city, followed by a large crowd, they came to a place where Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was begging by the side of the road. ⁴⁷When he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was about to pass by he began shouting: “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁸Those standing around rebuked him and told him to be quiet; but he continued to shout at the top of his voice: “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁹Hearing him, Jesus stopped and ordered: “Tell him to come here!” Then they called out to the blind man: “Take heart! Get on your feet. The Master is calling you.” ⁵⁰Bartimaeus then threw off his cloak, jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

⁵¹Jesus asked him: “What is it you want? What can I do for you?”

“Rabbi, I want my sight restored,” the blind man said.

⁵²“Go, because of your faith you are healed,” Jesus said to him. Immediately he could see and followed Jesus along with the crowd.

Jesus enters Jerusalem (11:1-14)

11 When Jesus and the disciples drew near to Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives.

²Jesus told two of the disciples to go to the village ahead of them. "As you enter the village you will find a colt on which no-one has ridden. Untie it and bring it here to Me. ³If anyone challenges you as to why you are taking the colt, tell him, 'The Lord needs it for now, but will see it is returned shortly.' "

⁴⁻⁵The two disciples duly found the colt in the street tethered outside a doorway. As they untied it, some people who were standing nearby asked: "What are you doing? Who gave you permission to take that colt?" ⁶The disciples answered in the manner Jesus had told them; so the people agreed to let them take the colt. ⁷When they brought it to Jesus, they threw their cloaks on its back so He could sit on it.

⁸As He journeyed into the city, many people spread their cloaks on the road in front of Him and others cut branches from trees in neighbouring fields and placed them on the road as well. Those ahead of Jesus and those who followed shouted out:

⁹"The Lord save us! He who comes in the Lord's name be blessed!"

¹⁰"The Kingdom of our father David is coming; God be praised."

"Our Saviour deserves the highest praise!"

¹¹Having entered Jerusalem, Jesus went to the temple. He looked at everything that was happening there; but as it was already late He took no action then. Instead He went with His disciples to stay at Bethany.

¹²Jesus was hungry after they had left Bethany on the following day. ¹³He noticed a little way off a fig tree that was in leaf, and so went to see if it was bearing any fruit. But He found nothing but leaves when He came to the tree; it was not the season for figs.

¹⁴The disciples overheard Jesus say to the tree: "No one will ever eat fruit from you again."

Jesus clears the temple (11:15-18)

¹⁵When they entered Jerusalem, Jesus went again to the temple area, where now He took action. He drove out those who were trading there. He then overturned the tables belonging to the money changers and the stalls of those selling doves for sacrifice. ¹⁶He stopped everybody bringing merchandise into the temple courts. ¹⁷He shouted out: "It is written in the scriptures, 'My house is to be called a house of prayer for all nations,' but look what you have done to it. It has become a den of robbers!"

¹⁸When the chief priests and teachers of the law saw what Jesus was doing and heard what He said, they decided that they must

find a way to kill Him. They were afraid of the influence He was having on all the people who were amazed at His teaching!

Faith in prayer (11:19-26)

¹⁹In the evening, Jesus and His disciples left the city. ²⁰The following morning, as they were returning to the city, they saw that the fig tree Jesus had cursed had shrivelled from its roots. ²¹Remembering what Jesus had done, Peter said: “Rabbi, look! That fig tree you cursed – it has withered!”

²²Jesus answered: “Have faith in God. ²³I tell you the truth, if anyone speaks to a mountain by saying, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ the mountain will be moved for him so long as he does not doubt in his heart, but truly believes that what he says must happen.

²⁴So I tell you, no matter what you ask in prayer, believe it is yours already, and it will be yours!

²⁵“Whenever you pray, it is essential that you forgive anyone against whom you hold anything; for then your heavenly Father will also forgive you all your sins. ²⁶But if you do not forgive others your heavenly father will not forgive your sins.”

The authority of Jesus questioned (11:27-33)

²⁷When they arrived in Jerusalem, Jesus was again walking in the temple courts when the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders approached Him. ²⁸“By what authority are You doing these things?” they demanded. “Who gave You the authority to act in such a way?”

²⁹Jesus replied: “Let me ask you a question. If you answer Me then I will answer your question, and I will tell you on whose authority I do these things. ³⁰Tell Me, was John’s baptism inspired by heaven, or was it the work of man?”

³¹They discussed this among themselves: “If we say that it was from heaven, He will ask us why we did not believe John. ³²We dare not say it was from man.” (Because John was regarded as a prophet by the people, they feared their reaction if they gave such an answer.) ³³So they said to Jesus: “We don’t know the answer to Your question.”

So Jesus replied: “In that case I will not tell you by whose authority I do these things.”

The vineyard and the wicked tenants (12:1-12)

12 Jesus then began to teach using this illustration: “A man planted a vineyard, surrounded it by a wall, dug a pit for

the winepress and built a watchtower. He then rented it to some farmers while he was away on a journey. ²He sent his servant to the tenants at harvest time to collect his share of the fruit. ³But the tenants took hold of the man, beat him and sent him away with nothing. ⁴So the owner sent another servant, but they beat him about the head and abused him also. ⁵The next servant the owner sent they killed. The owner continued to send other servants, but the tenants either beat or killed them all.

⁶“As a last resort he decided to send his own son whom he loved. ‘They must respect my own son,’ he said. ⁷But the tenants said among themselves: ‘He is the heir. If we kill him we can take the inheritance for ourselves.’ ⁸So they took hold of the son, killed him and threw his body out of the vineyard.”

⁹Jesus then asked the people: “What do you think the owner of the vineyard will do then? Obviously he will come himself, kill the tenants and appoint others to take their place. ¹⁰Have you not read the scripture that says, ‘the builders rejected the stone that has become the key-stone?’ ¹¹This is the Lord’s doing and it is wonderful to behold.”

¹²The leaders realised Jesus had used this illustration against them; so they were even more determined to arrest Him. However, they were afraid of the way the crowd would react, so they did nothing for the moment and went away instead.

Pay taxes to Caesar (12:13-17)

¹³Later they sent some Pharisees and those of Herod’s party to try to trap Jesus in what He said. ¹⁴So they put this question to Him: “Teacher, we know that You are not swayed by the opinions of men, but teach God’s ways according to the truth, and do so with integrity. You are not influenced by how important or otherwise a person is. Tell us, is it right to pay the Roman taxes to Caesar, or not? ¹⁵Should we Jews pay such taxes, or not?”

Jesus immediately saw through their hypocrisy. “Why do you try to trap Me with such a question? Bring Me a coin and then I can show you.” ¹⁶When they handed Him the coin He asked them: “Whose portrait is this on the coin, and who is the subject of this inscription?”

“Caesar,” they responded.

¹⁷“Well then, give to Caesar what is rightly due to Caesar, and to God what rightly belongs to Him,” Jesus told them. Such an answer both surprised and silenced them.

Questions about the resurrection (12:18-27)

¹⁸Then the Sadducees, who do not believe in resurrection, tried to trap Him with another question. ¹⁹“Teacher, Moses gave us all these instructions. He wrote that when a man’s brother dies and leaves his wife childless, he is to marry the widow and so provide children on behalf of his brother. ²⁰Now suppose there were seven brothers. The first married but left no children when he died. ²¹So the second brother married the widow but also died leaving her childless. The third did likewise. ²²In fact all seven brothers married the widow in turn, but all of them died before she had children. Eventually the woman also died. ²³Now, at the resurrection whose wife will she be? After all, she had married all seven brothers!”

²⁴Jesus replied: “You show by such senseless thinking that you are ignorant of both the scriptures and God’s power. ²⁵At the resurrection there will be no marriage, neither will people be given to one another in marriage. Those who have been raised from the dead will be as the angels in heaven.

²⁶“Concerning the resurrection, have you not read what Moses wrote about when God spoke to him from the bush? He said, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.’

²⁷“He is not God of the dead, but of successive generations of the living! You are so wrong in what you believe!”

The greatest commandment (12:28-34)

²⁸One of the teachers of the law listened to these debates and was impressed by the good answers He gave. So he asked Jesus: “What is the most important of all God’s commandments?”

²⁹Jesus answered: “The most important one is when God said: ‘Listen, my people Israel, there is only one Lord, only one God. ³⁰You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.’ ³¹The second most important command is: ‘Love your neighbour as much as you already love yourself.’ God has not given us commands greater than these!”

³²“That is a good answer, Master,” replied the questioner. “You are right when You say that there is but one God and no other except for Him. ³³It is much more important to love Him with all your heart, all your understanding and with all the strength you have, and to love your neighbour as yourself, than to bring to God a whole lot of burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

³⁴Jesus acknowledged this was a wise answer, so said to him: “You are very near to receiving the gift of God’s Kingdom.” After that, no one dared to try and trap Him with their questions.

Christ – David’s Lord (12:35-40)

³⁵While teaching in the temple courts, Jesus posed them a question: “How can it be that the teachers of the law called the Christ David’s son? ³⁶For under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, David himself declared: ‘The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit now at My right hand while I put Your enemies beneath Your feet.’”

³⁷“If David calls Him ‘Lord’ how can the Christ, the Messiah, be David’s son?

The crowd listening to Him were delighted by the way He silenced all the religious leaders. ³⁸Jesus warned them: “Beware of the teachers of the law. They love to walk about in their long robes and be acknowledged by everyone in the marketplaces. ³⁹They enjoy the most prominent seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets. ⁴⁰They sponge off widows and try to impress everyone with their long prayers. Little do they realise that those who behave like this are only storing up severe punishment for themselves.”

The widow’s offering (12:41-44)

⁴¹Jesus sat down directly opposite the place where people placed their offerings. He watched them as they gave into the temple treasury. Several of the wealthy threw in large amounts, often ostentatiously. ⁴²However, a poor widow came along and put in two of the cheapest copper coins, worth far less than a penny.

⁴³Jesus drew the attention of His disciples to this: “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has really put more into the treasury than any of the others. ⁴⁴They gave out of their ample resources; but despite her poverty, this widow put in everything she had to live on!”

Signs of the end of the times (13:1-8)

13 As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of His disciples remarked: “Teacher, look at those massive stones! What magnificent buildings there are here!”

²Jesus replied: “You see all these great buildings? Not one stone will be left on another. They will all be thrown down.”

³⁻⁴When Jesus was sitting away from the others on the Mount of Olives, across the valley from the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew approached Him and asked Him quietly: “Please tell us when these things will take place? What sign should we be looking for that will indicate that Your words are about to be fulfilled?”

⁵Jesus told them: “Be very careful that you do not allow anyone to deceive you. ⁶Many will claim to have come in My Name. They will say, ‘I am the one!’ And many will be deceived by them.

⁷“You will hear about wars and fears of war breaking out, but do not be afraid. There are bound to be many such conflicts, but this does not indicate the end of time. ⁸One nation will rise up in war against other nations. One kingdom will oppose another kingdom. There will be natural disasters such as earthquakes in some areas, famine in other places. But these are only the birth pangs of what is to come.

Stand firm in faith (13:9-13)

⁹“So you need to be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local authorities. You will be opposed in the synagogues and flogged for preaching the gospel. Yes, because of your faithfulness to Me, you will be brought before governors and kings, but these will be opportunities to witness to them. ¹⁰For the good news must be preached to all people everywhere.

¹¹“When you are arrested and tried for your faith, you will not need to worry about what to say. For when the time comes the Holy Spirit will give you the right words to speak. It will seem that He is the one doing the talking, not you.

¹²“One brother will betray another brother, even causing his death. A father will turn against his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them executed. ¹³It will seem that everyone hates you and is against you, simply because you believe who I am. But anyone who stands firm in his faith to the end will be saved eternally.

Warning of destruction and deception (13:14-37)

¹⁴“When you see that which is an abomination to God and which brings desolation to men, standing where it has no right to be, then understand that those who live in Judea will need to escape to the mountains. ¹⁵At that terrible time anyone on the roof of his house must not go into the house for any of his possessions. ¹⁶There will be no time for anyone in the open to fetch his coat. ¹⁷Imagine how

awful it will be then for those who are pregnant or those who are nursing young infants. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹ Pray that this calamity does not occur in winter, for never will there have been days of such total desolation, not since God created the world; and such devastation will never be known again. ²⁰ No-one would be able to survive, but for the fact that God will cause this time of devastation to be ended. He will do this for the sake of His children, those He has chosen for Himself. For their sakes He will end these days of terrible suffering.

²¹ "Some will say at that time: 'The Messiah has come. He is over here,' or 'Look, He is over there.' Do not believe such nonsense. ²² There will be false messiahs and false prophets who will perform signs and miracles that will deceive even those who have been chosen to know the truth. That seems hardly possible, but it will happen. ²³ So be careful. I have given you warning that all these things shall surely take place.

²⁴ "In those distressing days even worse things will occur to fulfil the prophetic words that have been written: 'It will seem that the sun has been put out and the moon can give no light. ²⁵ The stars will fall from their appointed places in the sky and even the heavens will be shaken.'

²⁶ "This is the time when men will see Me, the Son of Man, coming again, but then in clouds of glory and with great power. ²⁷ Then I will send My angels to gather My chosen ones from every direction, from the farthest limits of both earth and the heavens.

²⁸ "You can learn an important lesson from the fig tree to help you understand what I am saying. When the branches of the tree become tender you know that its leaves will sprout and the summer is fast approaching. ²⁹ In like manner, when you see the things I have described happening, then as My followers you will know that what I promise is about to happen; it is truly imminent.

³⁰ "I tell you the truth, these things will all herald the end of this age. ³¹ Heaven and earth as you know it will pass away, but My words are eternal, they will never pass away.

³² "I tell you clearly, no-one knows the day or the precise time when these things will happen. Not even the angels in heaven know. I do not even know Myself; only the Father knows. So you certainly do not know when that time is to come. ³³ This is why I tell you to be on your guard and to be ready. ³⁴ You have to be like servants left in charge of the master's house while he is away. Each has his appointed task, and someone is always on guard duty, keeping watch.

³⁵“So be alert and ready because you do not know when the owner of the house will return. It may be in the evening, or at midnight, before dawn breaks or when it does break. ³⁶Do not let him find you asleep because he comes suddenly when you are unprepared. ³⁷So I say to you again; be alert all the time! And I want everyone to hear and to heed this warning.”

Woman anoints Jesus (14:1-9)

14 It was just two days before the Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and teachers of the law were scheming how they could arrest Jesus without causing a public outcry; they were determined to kill Him. ²“We cannot do this during the feast, for there will be a riot among the people if we do,” they said.

³Meanwhile Jesus was staying at Bethany, a short distance from Jerusalem. He was having a meal in Simon the Leper’s house when a woman entered the room and broke a flask of very expensive perfume made of pure nard, and poured it over His head. ⁴⁻⁵This was so costly that some present were indignant: “What a waste,” they said, “this perfume is worth more than a man earns in a year; it would have been more useful to sell the perfume and give the money to the poor.” So they criticised the woman sharply.

⁶Jesus intervened: “Stop that; leave her alone. Why do you criticise her? She has just done something very beautiful for Me. ⁷You will always have the poor with you and you can help them whenever you choose. But I will not always be with you. ⁸She has blessed Me in the only way she could. By pouring this perfume on My body, she has prepared it for burial. ⁹I tell you the truth, in the future when the gospel is preached anywhere in the world, what she has just done for Me will be spoken about. Because of this loving action she will have her place in history!”

Judas betrays Jesus (14:10-11)

¹⁰This was too much for one of the twelve, Judas Iscariot. He went to the chief priests and offered to betray Jesus into their hands.

¹¹They were overjoyed by this and offered Judas money in exchange for his betrayal. So from that time he sought a suitable opportunity to deliver Jesus into their hands.

The Last Supper (14:12-25)

¹²It was the custom to sacrifice the Passover Lamb on the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread. So the disciples asked Jesus: “Where should we go to prepare for You to eat the Passover meal?”

¹³⁻¹⁴He sent two of the disciples into the city telling them: "You will be met by a man carrying a jar of water," normally a task done by women. "Follow him and say to the owner of the house he enters, 'Take us to the guest room, where the Teacher will eat the Passover with His disciples.' ¹⁵He will take you to a large room upstairs, furnished and suitable. Prepare for us to eat there together."

¹⁶The disciples went into the city and everything happened exactly as Jesus had said. So they made preparations for the Passover.

¹⁷Jesus arrived with the twelve in the evening. ¹⁸During the meal, while they were reclining at the table, Jesus said: "I tell you truly, one of you who is eating with Me now is going to betray Me."

¹⁹Such a thing seemed unthinkable and they were all shocked. One by one they asked Him: "Surely I would never do that. It isn't me, is it?"

²⁰Jesus repeated: "It is one of you twelve who have been close to Me, one who dips bread in the bowl with Me now. ²¹The Son of Man will leave you in the way that has been prophesied. It is already written. But the man who betrays the Son of Man will be cursed eternally. It would have been better for him if he had never been born."

²²During the meal Jesus took some bread, gave thanks to God and then broke it, giving a piece to each disciple saying: "Take this, for this is My body." ²³Then He took a cup, gave thanks over it and passed it round for all of them to drink. ²⁴As they did so, He said: "This is My blood that is to be poured out for many, the blood of the new covenant between God and man. ²⁵I tell you most emphatically that I will not drink of the vine's fruit again until the day I drink the new wine in God's heavenly Kingdom."

Jesus predicts Peter's denial (14:26-31)

²⁶They sang a hymn of praise to God before leaving to go to the Mount of Olives. ²⁷Jesus told them: "All of you will fail Me, for it has been written, 'I will strike the shepherd and then the sheep will be scattered.' ²⁸However, after I have risen, I will see you again in Galilee."

²⁹"Even if everyone else fails You, I will never do that," declared Peter. ³⁰Jesus told him: "I tell you, there is no doubt that tonight even you will have denied three times that you know Me before you hear the rooster crow for the second time."

³¹Peter was most insistent: "I am ready to die with you if necessary. I would certainly never deny that I knew You!" The attitude of all the others was similar.

Gethsemane (14:32-42)

³²When they came to the place known as Gethsemane, Jesus said to His disciples: "I am going to pray; sit here and wait for Me." ³³He then took Peter, James and John with Him, but it was clear that He was now very troubled and was in deep distress. ³⁴He told them: "I am so overcome with such sadness that I feel I could die. Stay here and pray for Me."

³⁵He went further ahead by Himself, fell to the ground on His face and prayed that, if possible, He might not have to suffer what lay ahead. ³⁶"Father, Father," He kept saying, "everything is possible for You. Please take this cup of suffering from Me, but only if this is Your will, not Mine."

³⁷When He returned to where He left the three disciples, He found them asleep. "Are you sleeping, Simon?" He asked Peter. "Was it too much to ask you to pray for Me for just one hour?" ³⁸Be on the watch and pray that you will not yield to temptation. Your spirit may be willing, but your body is weak."

³⁹He went away on His own again and prayed in a similar manner as before. ⁴⁰When He returned, He again found them asleep; they were too tired to keep awake. Embarrassed, they did not know what to say to Him.

⁴¹After praying a third time, Jesus returned again: "Are you still sleeping? All you can do is rest! Enough of this! My time has now come. Look, the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴²Get up! Let us go and meet My betrayer!"

Jesus' arrest (14:43-65)

⁴³Even as He was speaking, Judas, who had been one of the twelve disciples, approached together with a crowd sent by the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders. They were armed with swords and clubs. ⁴⁴Judas had given them a signal, 'The one I kiss is the man you want; arrest Him and take Him away; but guard Him carefully.' ⁴⁵So he went directly to Jesus and greeted Him. "Rabbi," he said, and kissed Him. ⁴⁶Immediately the crowd grabbed hold of Him.

⁴⁷Then one of the disciples drew his sword and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. ⁴⁸"Why have you come with swords and clubs to seize Me?" Jesus asked them. "I am not leading a rebellion. ⁴⁹Every day I taught you openly in the temple courts, but you did not dare to take Me then. However, the scriptures have to be fulfilled." ⁵⁰Then all Jesus' friends fled for their lives and left Him alone.

⁵¹⁻⁵²A young man had been following Jesus. They tried to seize him but only grabbed the linen robe he was wearing; so he fled naked.

⁵³They took Jesus to a meeting that included the high priest, all the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law. ⁵⁴Peter followed at a safe distance, even entering into the courtyard of the high priest's house where the meeting was taking place. He sat together with the guards warming himself by the fire.

⁵⁵⁻⁵⁶The chief priests and the entire Council wanted to find evidence against Jesus to justify putting Him to death. But they could not find anything against Him, even though many testified falsely. They could not accept their statements because they conflicted with one another.

⁵⁷⁻⁵⁸Then some came forward with further false testimony against Jesus: "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with the hands of men and in three days I will raise up another temple that has not been made by men.'" ⁵⁹Yet even then there were discrepancies in their testimony.

⁶⁰Then the high priest took over and demanded of Jesus: "Are You not going to answer these allegations? What do You say about these things the witnesses are charging You with?" ⁶¹Jesus said nothing, refusing to answer.

So the high priest challenged Him directly: "Are You the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the blessed One?"

⁶²"I AM," said Jesus. "And you will see Me sitting as the Son of Man at the right hand of the Mighty One, when I come again on the clouds of heaven."

⁶³At this the high priest tore his robe as a sign of disgust. "We do not need any further witnesses after such a blatant admission, do we?" he asked. ⁶⁴"You have heard the blasphemy for yourselves. How do you vote?"

They all condemned Him to death. ⁶⁵Some began to spit on Him. They blindfolded Him, punched Him and said: "Prophecy then! Tell us who hit You!" Then the guards took Him away and gave Him a further beating.

Peter denies association with Jesus (14:66-72)

⁶⁶While this was happening, Peter was still below in the courtyard where one of the high priest's servant girls saw Peter warming himself by the fire. ⁶⁷She looked closely at him and said: "You were one of those with that Nazarene, Jesus."

⁶⁸Peter denied it. “No, no, I don’t know what you are talking about,” he said and then withdrew to the gateway; and a cock crowed. ⁶⁹But the servant girl continued to look at him and said to others standing about: “I am sure this man is one of them.” ⁷⁰But again Peter denied what she said.

A short time later, one of those standing near Peter said: “You must be one of them, for you also come from Galilee.” ⁷¹Peter began to curse and swear to them: “I do not even know this Man of whom you speak.”

⁷²No sooner were the words out of his mouth than the cock crowed for the second time. Peter immediately remembered what Jesus had said to Him: ‘You will deny three times that you even know Me before the rooster crows twice.’ Peter felt heartbroken and could not hold back his tears.

Jesus on trial before Pilate (15:1-5)

15 It was very early in the morning when the chief priests, elders, teachers of the law and the whole Council reached their decision. Jesus was bound, taken away and handed over to Pilate, the Roman governor. ²He asked Jesus: “Are you really the King of the Jews?”

“Yes, what you have said is correct,” Jesus answered.

³Then the chief priest listed their accusations against Him. ⁴“Will you not answer all these allegations?” Pilate asked Jesus. ⁵But, to Pilate’s astonishment, He made no reply.

Jesus condemned, mocked and beaten (15:6-19)

⁶At the feast it was customary for the Roman occupying forces to release one prisoner as a gesture to the people, and to them was given the choice as to who should be released. ⁷One prisoner was a man called Barabbas who was guilty of murder in an uprising against the Romans, and so was popular with many of the people. ⁸They asked Pilate to fulfil the customary gesture.

⁹“Shall I release the King of the Jews to you?” Pilate suggested. ¹⁰He was well aware that the Pharisees had only accused Him out of envy. ¹¹However, the chief priests had already put the word around that they should ask Pilate to release Barabbas, not Jesus.

¹²So Pilate asked: “What do you want me to do with the one you call your King, the King of the Jews?”

¹³“Crucify Him!” the crowd shouted.

¹⁴“Why? Of what crime is He guilty to deserve such a punishment?” Pilate asked.

They only shouted even louder: “Crucify Him!”

¹⁵To please the people, Pilate agreed to release Barabbas. Then he had Jesus flogged and handed Him over to the military to crucify Him.

¹⁶⁻¹⁷The soldiers took Jesus to the palace known as the Praetorium. The whole company of soldiers gathered and put a purple robe on Jesus to mock Him as a king. They even gave Him a crown of thorn branches that had been twisted together, which they placed on His head.

¹⁸“All hail, king of the Jews!” they mockingly cried out to Him.

¹⁹Repeatedly they hit Him around the head with a staff and then spat on Him. Then they fell on their knees before Him as if to pay Him homage, but they were only mocking Him further.

The Crucifixion (15:20-32)

²⁰When they had finished toying with Him they removed the purple robe and returned His own clothes, before taking Him to the place of crucifixion.

²¹By now Jesus was very weak physically, so the soldiers forced a man from Cyrene called Simon to carry the cross for Him. Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, had come from the country for the feast and just happened to be on hand.

²²They led Jesus to Golgotha, which means the ‘Place of the Skull.’

²³When they offered Him the mixture of wine and myrrh to deaden the pain, He refused to take it. ²⁴Then they nailed Him to the cross. They decided to cast lots to see who should have His clothes.

²⁵They crucified Jesus at nine o’clock in the morning. ²⁶They nailed the charge against Him to the cross: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

²⁷Either side of Him they crucified two thieves. ²⁸In this way the scripture was fulfilled that says He was counted among sinners.

²⁹Those passing by shook their heads and shouted insults at Jesus: “You said You would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. So let us see You do it. ³⁰If You are really a saviour, come down from the cross now and save Yourself!”

³¹The chief priests and teachers of the law mocked Him among themselves in similar fashion saying: “He saved others but look at Him now; He can’t save Himself! ³²We will see and believe in You as the Christ and the King of Israel if You come down now from the cross.” Even those crucified with Him also mocked Him.

Jesus' death (15:33-41)

³³⁻³⁴At noon it became completely dark over the entire land. The darkness lasted until around three o'clock when Jesus cried in a loud voice: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

³⁵Hearing this, some of the bystanders said: "Listen, He calls for Elijah." ³⁶One of them quickly filled a sponge with wine vinegar. Placing the sponge on a stick he lifted it to Jesus lips saying: "Leave Him alone. We will see if Elijah comes to rescue Him."

³⁷Then with a loud cry, Jesus took His last breath and died.

³⁸At that very moment the curtain in the temple that concealed the Holy of holies was torn apart from top to bottom. ³⁹The centurion who stood there before Jesus heard His cry and watched how He died. "This must really be the Son of God," he said.

⁴⁰⁻⁴¹Some of the women, who had followed Jesus in Galilee to provide for His practical needs, watched from a distance. They included Mary Magdalene, Mary the Mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. But there were many other women who had also followed Him to Jerusalem who were also present.

Jesus' burial (15:42-47)

⁴²⁻⁴³It was now the day before the Sabbath, known as the Day of Preparation. Towards evening a prominent member of the Council, Joseph of Arimathea, a man who longed for the coming of God's Kingdom, had the boldness to go to Pilate to ask Him to release Jesus' body to him for burial. ⁴⁴Pilate was surprised to learn that He had died already. He summoned the centurion to verify if this was indeed true. ⁴⁵When the centurion confirmed that Jesus had died, Pilate authorised Joseph to take His body.

⁴⁶Joseph went and took His body down from the cross, wrapped it in a linen cloth he had brought with him and placed it in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone over the tomb's entrance. ⁴⁷Both Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses had watched where Jesus' body had been laid to rest.

The Resurrection (16:1-13)

16 When the Sabbath had ended, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, together with Salome, went and bought spices with which to anoint Jesus' body. ²They went to the tomb very early on the Sunday morning, just after sunrise. ³However, they were concerned about who could roll the heavy stone away that covered the entrance to the tomb.

⁴When they arrived at the place, to their surprise they discovered that the large stone had been moved already. ⁵So they entered the tomb and to their astonishment found a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe.

⁶“Don’t be afraid,” he said, “You have come for Jesus the Nazarene who was crucified. As you can see, He is not here. He has risen from the dead. Look, there is the place where they laid Him. ⁷Now go and give Peter and the other disciples this message, ‘Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee and you will see Him there exactly as He promised you!’”

⁸Trembling with fear and utterly bewildered by what they had seen, the women left the tomb and hurried away, too frightened to say anything to anyone!

⁹However, Jesus actually appeared later to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had driven out seven demons. ¹⁰She went and told His friends who were gathered together, mourning and weeping over His death. ¹¹But they could not believe her when she told them that Jesus was not only alive, but that she had actually seen Him.

¹²Later still, the risen Jesus appeared to two of them as they were walking in the countryside, but they did not recognise at first that it was indeed Jesus. ¹³When they returned to Jerusalem and told the others, they still did not believe.

Disciples commissioned (16:14-20)

¹⁴So then Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples as they were eating together. He reprimanded them for their lack of faith and stubborn refusal to believe those who had reported seeing Him after He had risen.

¹⁵Jesus gave them this commission: “Go to every part of the world and preach the good news everywhere. ¹⁶Whoever believes in Me and is then baptised will be saved and will be given eternal life; but whoever does not believe will remain condemned. ¹⁷Those who believe will perform signs to verify the truth of what they believe. They will drive out demons in My Name from those who are in such bondage. They will speak in new languages given them by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸Some will even pick up deadly snakes with their hands without being harmed: others will be given deadly poison to drink, but it will have no effect on them. They will lay their hands on the sick and they will be healed.”

¹⁹When the Lord Jesus had finished speaking to them, they watched as He was taken up into heaven, where He took His place at God’s right hand.

²⁰Then the disciples began to obey the commission Jesus had given them. Everywhere they went they preached the good news of all Jesus had said and done. The Lord Himself worked with them performing the miraculous signs that verified that what they preached was the truth!

Verses 9-19 only appear in later manuscripts and are widely regarded to have been added to the original at a later date.

