

# NEXT STEPS

DEVELOPING HABITS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

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## **CONGRATULATIONS:**

The decision you've made to become a follower of Jesus Christ is the most important decision of your life. God created you with a purpose and that purpose begins with knowing Him. You may not be completely sure what happens when you decide to follow Jesus or what you should do now. There are probably a million questions running through your mind. This book will answer some of those questions and help you get on the right track in your new Christian life.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!  
- 2 Corinthians 5:17

Following Jesus is both a one-time decision and a life-long process. God wants you to have a meaningful life in relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus. However, He doesn't force that desire on you. He gives you a choice. You can choose to live according to His plan, or you can choose to go your own way. If you choose to say "no" to God—if you decide to live life on your own terms—that decision separates you from Him. Not only is refusing God a result of sinful nature, it is sin itself.

On your own, there is nothing you can do to bring yourself into a right relationship with God. Good works won't do it. Religion won't do it. Morality won't do it. Neither will money nor philosophy nor knowledge nor science. For centuries, seekers have tried all of these paths with little success.

Take note of the story the following verses tell:

There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death. - Proverbs 14:12

But God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. - Romans 5:8

For there is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity--the man Christ Jesus. - 1 Timothy 2:5

Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but He died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but He was raised to life in the Spirit. - 1 Peter 3:18

You have taken a big step by coming to the point of realization that Jesus is the mediator who restores your relationship with God. You have prayed and asked Jesus to be the leader and director of your life. You've asked Him to forgive you for all the ways you've sinned against Him while living life on your own terms, and you've committed to becoming more like Him. At the moment you asked Jesus to come into your life, He did. Your salvation is sealed and secure.

You can't lose your salvation, but the process of becoming a fully developing follower of Jesus is ongoing. There are tools to help you get started on this path--tools to help you better understand the decision you've made and to help you grow in your faith. In the following pages, you will find:

- An explanation of your five Next Steps
- The entire Gospel of John from the Bible, plus a reading plan to help you get started.
- Additional resources to help you grow.

The Bible says, "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" (2 Corinthians 5:17) If you have asked Jesus to forgive you of your sins and come into your life, then, according to God Himself, you are a new creation! As of right now, real life starts. Anything prior to knowing Jesus was simply existing, but knowing God and walking with Him is really living. Welcome to life.

## **Next Step #1**

# **STUDY YOUR BIBLE**

How much do you really know about the Bible? Maybe you have read bits and pieces of the Bible, but you never understood it as a cohesive unit. As followers of Jesus, we believe that the Bible is the inspired, inerrant word of God.

Think about these facts:

The Bible is comprised of sixty-six books that were written over a period of 1500 years by over forty different authors, from different places, and with different life experiences. These authors did not collaborate with one another. In many instances, they didn't even speak the same language. Yet their work, passed down through many generations and translated many times, has resulted in the consistent manuscript you are about to integrate into your life—the manuscript that tells God's story of the creation of the universe, the beginning and fall of man, and God's plan and purpose for us to know Him through His Son, Jesus Christ.

God communicates with us through His Word. There are several methods for making that communication a daily part of your experience with God.

You lose grip on something easily if you only hold on with two or three fingers. God wants you to get a good grasp on what is written in the Bible and how you can apply it to your life. Think of holding a Bible with all five of these fingers:

- **Hear:** Make sure you listen to good Bible teaching, both through your church and through other resources you can find. Take notes on what you hear.
- **Read:** You will get to know God better by spending time reading His word. Set a goal to read the Bible for at least fifteen minutes every day.
- **Study:** Make sure you are studying the truths you read. As you dig into the Bible, ask yourself these questions:
  - What promise is there to claim?
  - What example is there to follow?
  - What command is there to obey?
  - What sin is there to confess?

One of the best ways to study your Bible effectively is to get involved in a growth group. Growth groups are groups of people that meet to study the Bible, pray for one another, and enjoy life together. We'll take a closer look at groups in "Next Step #3".

- **Memorize:** God wants us to hold Scripture close to our heart and be able to call on it when it is needed. This ability comes as we memorize verses that speak to us. Try to memorize at least one verse a week.
- **Meditate:** This ties in with memorizing. After you memorize a verse, spend some time meditating on it. Analyze and dwell on its truth as you jog, walk, drive in your car, cook, or play.

The Bible is useful and helpful in all situations. Here is a powerful verse from the book of Hebrews reminding us of this truth:

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. - Hebrews 4:12

## **CHOOSING A BIBLE TRANSLATION**

Although there are many worthwhile translations of the Bible, here are three that are easy to read and accurate:

- The New Living Translation (NLT)
- The New International Version (NIV)
- The English Standard Version (ESV)

Try going to a bookstore or reading passages online to see which translation you are most comfortable reading.

As you take the step to integrate the Bible into your daily life, you will see how it is relevant to everything that you face. God will use your time in the Bible to teach you about His truths and draw you closer to Him.

## **Next Step #2**

### **LEARN TO PRAY**

The best way to build a relationship with someone is to spend time talking to the other person. You wouldn't have many friends if you never talked to them, would you? How would your relationship with your family suffer if you never made time for them, or never let them speak to you?

The same thing is true in your relationship with God. Just as reading your Bible helps you know God more intimately, so does spending time with Him in prayer. Prayer is your way of communicating with God.

Here are a couple tips for developing a strong prayer life:

- Set aside time every day for prayer. Don't be tempted to push your conversations with God into the leftover pieces of your busy day. Make prayer a priority. Combining your prayer time and your Bible reading time into a morning devotional is a great idea.

Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray. - Mark 1:35

- Son's role-play for God. Just be yourself and talk to Him. You don't have to use fancy words and you don't have to try to impress Him. Just come to God as simply and honestly as you can. Speak from your heart. He is your father.

I will give them hearts that recognize me as the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me wholeheartedly. - Jeremiah 24:7

Now that you know you need to spend time in honest, open conversation with God every day, you may be wondering what that looks like. Consider this Scripture.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done.  
- Philippians 4:6

So, how should you pray?

You can pray in a number of ways, but over the years, these are some ways which have been found to be helpful:

- Spend some time praising and thanking God for the good things in your life.
- Confess any sin that you may be struggling with.
- Tell Him what is worrying you and what you need help with.
- Pray that God will guide and direct your life in the way it is supposed to go.

Remember, prayer is a conversation, not a monologue. As you develop your prayer life, you will get more comfortable both speaking to and hearing from God. So, go ahead and talk to God. Ask Him to reveal himself to you. He is your guide on this journey. Make sure the lines of communication are open.

## **Next Step #3**

# **CONNECT TO A GROUP**

As a new follower of Jesus, it is critically important that you get plugged in with a thriving, healthy church. The best place to learn about God and grow in your faith is around other people who want to do the same.

Making the commitment to get involved in a church gives you many great opportunities to grow in your faith. You get the opportunity to:

- Learn practical tools from the Bible to help with everyday life.
- Meet some friends to do life together with.
- Use your time, talents & resources to help others.

Actually, getting involved in church is not optional. God commands us to gather together as a spiritual family. He wants us to understand the importance of meeting regularly with other people who are passionate about following Jesus. If we don't, we will naturally begin to get discouraged and pulled down by the everyday concerns of life. We have to set apart time to come together with other believers for worship and teaching.

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another . . . - Hebrews 10:24-25

But not only that, God wants us to do life with others who are on a similar journey as our own. We were built for relationship with one another; and those relationships are

best developed in a group environment. So one of the best Next Steps you can take as a new Christian is to join a group.

Groups are a great way to meet new friends, have fun together, grow closer to God, and make a difference in the community around you. You'll find people who are friendly but not obnoxious, spiritual but not creepy, people who don't take themselves too seriously, but want to make the most out of life.

Groups are typically 12-15 people who get together to learn about God, develop friendships with each other, and have a good time. When you join a group it usually lasts 6-10 weeks. After a break, you will have the chance to join a new one. There are always different types of groups available, which give you the freedom to choose a group that suits your interests and schedule. So keep an eye out for the next group season catalog, find the group that suites you best and get in community.

There is no such thing as a healthy, growing, lone-ranger Christian. As you plug into the church and join a group, you will learn more about God, develop relationships with other believers, and have the chance to serve. All of these things, combined with faithful prayer and Bible study, will work together to help you become a fully developing follower of Jesus Christ.

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord". - Psalm 122:1

## **Next Step #4**

### **BE BAPTIZED**

Baptism confuses a lot of people. Initially, it's not easy to understand the significance of being totally immersed in water after becoming a Christian. Much of the confusion centers on questions like, "I was sprinkled as a child, so I don't have to be baptized, right?" Or "if I don't get baptized does that mean I'm not a Christian?"

When you make the decision to commit your life to Jesus Christ, you become a Christian and you cannot lose that. The Bible teaches that when you become a Christian to let other know through the act of being baptized by immersion, following Jesus' example. It's a next step. Baptism is an act of obedience and a public declaration of faith.

When Jesus was ready to begin His earthly ministry, He showed His devotion to the Father by being baptized:

Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John tried to talk Him out of it. 'I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,' He said, 'so why are you coming to me?' But Jesus said, 'It should be done, for we must carry out all that God required.' So John agreed to baptize Him. After His baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on Him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.' - Matthew 3:13-17

Later, the apostles taught that all who accept the message of Jesus Christ and invite Him into their lives should follow His example of baptism:

Peter replied, 'Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins . . .' Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day -- about 3,000 in all. - Acts 2:38, 41

Being baptized is symbolic of two essential truths of your faith:

1. **What Jesus did for you:** "He died for your sins, was buried and came back to life" (1 Cor. 15:3-4)
2. **What has happened to you:** "You died to your old life, are buried in baptism and raised to live a new life in Jesus Christ." (Romans 6:3-4)

Never get tricked into thinking that baptism is what saves you. The work of your salvation was done the moment that you believed in your heart that Jesus is Lord and professed that belief by asking Him to come into your life and forgive you of your sins. Baptism is a Next Step of obedience – the outward symbol of the work God has done in you. You have been raised to walk in newness of life! That's definitely something to celebrate!

If you'd like to take the step of being Baptized, just watch for the next announcement and sign up! A leader will contact you, help answer any questions, and get you ready to take this monumental moment in your life.

(For further questions about baptism see Appendix 2.)

## **Next Step #5**

# **LIVE A LIFE OF WORSHIP**

You were made to worship God! Worship is not just something that happens in a church service. Your daily life is an act of worship, as you live in a way that brings pleasure to God.

You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For You created all things, and they exist because You created what You pleased. - Revelation 4:11

You bring pleasure to God when you:

- Love Him supremely
- Trust Him completely
- Obey Him wholeheartedly
- Praise Him continually
- Use your abilities

Every aspect of your life can be an expression of worship when you live in the realization and recognition of who God is and what He has done. Pastor Rick Warren writes in *The Purpose Driven Life*,

*“Every activity can be transformed into an act of worship when you do it for the praise, glory and pleasure of God... How then is it possible to do everything for the glory of God? By doing everything as if you were doing it for Jesus and by carrying on a continual conversation with Him while you do it.”*

Worship can happen anytime and anywhere. In fact, God calls us to a life of worship.

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life -- your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking around life -- and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for Him. - Romans 12:1

Ways you can worship at Westside:

- Attend a weekend service
- Volunteer on Sunday morning or during the week
- Give financially (called a Tithe)
- Join a Growth Group

## **YOUR STORY**

Take a few minutes to write out your story of becoming a Christian. This is the beginning of your testimony and will be a powerful tool as you start to share what Christ has done in your life.

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## **A FINAL THOUGHT**

You are a new creation on a new journey. I hope that you will take the Next Steps we've discussed to heart. Take the time to write out your story: think about what God has brought you through. And spend some time studying all of the verses that substantiate those beliefs. As you become a Christian by faith, you should do all you can to seek, study, and learn about the life that is now yours through Christ.

May this book continue to be helpful to you as you start walking your new path. It isn't meant to answer every single one of your questions. No book could ever do that. The truth is that no one can tell you about every twist and turn your journey will have and look like with God. That's the beauty of a relationship. You jump in and see where it leads. Enjoy it.

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love Him.  
-1 Corinthians 2:9-10

# Appendix 1

## WHO I AM WHEN I FOLLOW JESUS

### Bible Verses for Reference

I am God's child	John 1:12
As a disciple, I am a friend of Jesus Christ	John 15:15
I have been made right before God.	Romans 5:1
I am together with the Lord, and I am one with Him in spirit.	1 Corinthians 6:17
I have been bought with a price and I belong to God	1 Corinthians 6:19-20
I am a member of Christ's body	1 Corinthians 12:27
I have been chosen by God and adopted as His child.	Ephesians 1:3-8
I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.	Colossians 1:13-14
I am complete in Jesus.	Colossians 2:9-10
I have direct access to the throne of grace through Jesus Christ.	Hebrews 4:14-16
I am free from condemnation.	Romans 8:1-2
I am assured that God works for my good in all circumstances.	Romans 8:28
I cannot be separated from the love of God.	Romans 8:31-39
I have been established and anointed by God.	2 Corinthians 1:21-22
I am hidden with Christ in God.	Colossians 3:1-4
I am confident that God will complete the good work He started in me.	Philippians 1:6
I am a citizen of heaven.	Philippians 3:20
I have not been given a spirit of fear but of power, love, and a sound mind.	2 Timothy 1:7
I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.	1 John 5:18
I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine, and a channel of His life.	John 15:5
I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.	John 15:16

## **Appendix 2**

# **QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISM**

### **Q: When should I be baptized?**

A: As soon as you have decided to receive Christ into your life, you can and should be baptized. There is no reason to delay.

Those who believed . . . were baptized . . . that day! - Acts 2:41

Then Philip began with the Scripture and told him the Good News about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said, 'Look, here is water! Why shouldn't I be baptized right now?' Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' The man answered, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.' So they went down to the water and Philip baptized him. - Acts 8:35-38

### **Q: Can I be baptized together with my family and friends?**

A: Yes! If each person fully understands the meaning of baptism, and each one has personally placed his or her trust in Christ for salvation, we encourage families to be baptized at the same time.

However it is important to remember that baptism is a personal statement of faith, not a family or group tradition. It is not wise to delay your baptism while waiting on others to join you. This puts an undue pressure on them, and delays you taking your next step.

**Q: What should I wear when I'm baptized?**

A: Wear shorts and a dark t-shirt. Bring a change of clothes, a towel, and a plastic bag for your wet clothes.

**Q: What will happen at my baptism?**

A: One of the pastors will briefly explain the meaning of baptism. You will wait for your turn to be baptized. The pastor will briefly lower you just under the water and then raise you back up. Then it's time to celebrate so please invite your family and friends to join in this special moment with you.

## **Appendix 3**

# **HOW CAN I BE SURE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS**

Sometimes, after accepting Jesus into our lives, we begin to doubt whether His forgiveness really covers all of our past mistakes. We wonder if Jesus dying on the cross was enough to truly cover every one of our sins. What we are actually questioning is the assurance of our salvation. These doubts may surface because of a persistent sin, a personal crisis, or a feeling of separation from God.

God wants us to have that full assurance that He loves us and that because we have asked Jesus to be our Lord, He has forgiven us - completely. The doubts and uncertainties that creep up are not from God. When we face such questions, we must rely on His promises rather than our own judgment or emotions. In our own understanding, we are likely to minimize the significance of what God has done.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and mind as you live in Christ Jesus. - Philippians 4:6-7

To overcome doubts, spend some time meditating on the single most important fact about salvation. Here it is: Salvation is a gift from God.

God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. - Ephesians 2:8, 9

God is so serious about saving us from our sins that He sent Jesus into this world as a sacrifice. God freely forgives us, and gives us purpose, when we confess our sin to Him and ask His son to come into our lives as our leader and director.

For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent His son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through Him. - John 3:16, 17

When a new Christian questions whether or not he has experienced true forgiveness, he needs to look back to his original decision to begin a relationship with Jesus. If he was serious about becoming a follower of Jesus and receiving forgiveness for his past mistakes, then God is just as serious about engaging in that relationship.

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and He is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. - John 10:27-29

We can rest in the assurance of our salvation without doubt because salvation does not depend on us - it depends on God. And He is trustworthy.

Several issues common to our human nature could lead you to doubt whether or not you are truly a follower of Jesus. Here are some struggles that you may experience:

### **Placing too much emphasis on emotions:**

Becoming a follower of Jesus is usually expressed in terms of feelings, but the assurance of our salvation is found in the significance of God's gift to us. We do not become followers of Jesus based on a feeling, but rather based on the start of a relationship with Jesus. We can trust Him even when our own faith is weak, when we have done wrong, or when He feels distant. Think about this promise from Scripture:

Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and He knows everything. - 1 John 3:19, 20

### **Comparing your experience with someone else's experience:**

Sometimes, when we hear other people's stories about how they came to accept Jesus, we begin to question our own salvation experience. If our story is different, or if someone else seems closer to God than we feel, we may start to wonder, "Am I really a Christian?" Or "Why don't I have that kind of relationship with God?"

We are all uniquely crafted. God made us with different personalities and different ways of relating. You are an individual. You will never relate to God exactly like someone else - someone who has a different temperament and

background of experiences - and you shouldn't want to. Thankfully, we can affirm and celebrate the dynamic ways God reveals Himself to other people without allowing them to be negative reflections on our own experience and relationship with our Father.

### **Doubting God's love after a period of falling away:**

Understand that being a follower of Jesus does not mean that you will never again be tempted, or that you'll never make another mistake. We are all still human and we have to work at growing into fully-developing followers of Christ. Even when you stumble, God still loves you because you are His child. 1 John 1:8-9 tells us how to deal with our times of failure:

If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. - 1 John 1:8, 9

Remember what we said earlier - becoming a follower of Jesus is both an event and a process.

If we have committed ourselves to God as He has made Himself known to us, we have His assurance of our eternal security. We cannot lose the salvation that He has sealed with the sacrifice of His son. If we have sincerely asked for forgiveness for our sins and invited Jesus into our lives, we can trust that we are new, forgiven creatures in right relationship with God.

Yes, turn to our God, for He will forgive generously. - Isaiah 55:7

## **Appendix 4**

# **RESOURCES FOR FURTHER GROWTH**

### **Books:**

Failing Forward by John Maxwell

Case for Christ by Lee Strobel

The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

Experiencing God by Henry Blackaby

Secrets of the Vine by Bruce Wilkinson

So, You Want to be Like Christ by Chuck Swindoll

### **Web Sites:**

Bible App: [www.youversion.com](http://www.youversion.com)

ELC: [www.epiclifechurch.com](http://www.epiclifechurch.com)

### **Christian Radio Stations:**

The Way: 104.5 FM

Air1: 96.3 FM, 102.7 FM

KLove: 97.9 FM, 107.1 FM

The Fish: 104.1 FM

## Reading Plan for the Gospel of John

- Day 1: John 1-7
- Day 2: John 8-14
- Day 3: John 15-21
- Day 4: John 1:1-18
- Day 5: John 1:19-51
- Day 6: John 2:1-25
- Day 7: John 3:1-36
- Day 8: John 4:1-38
- Day 9: John 4:39 - 5:15
- Day 10: John 5:16-47
- Day 11: John 6:1-21
- Day 12: John 6:22-71
- Day 13: John 7:1-36
- Day 14: John 7:37 - 8:11
- Day 15: John 8:12-30
- Day 16: John 8:31-59
- Day 17: John 9:1-34
- Day 18: John 9:35 - 10:21
- Day 19: John 10:22-42
- Day 20: John 11:1-44
- Day 21: John 11:45 - 12:19
- Day 22: John 12:20-50
- Day 23: John 13:1-38
- Day 24: John 14:1-31
- Day 25: John 15:1-27
- Day 26: John 16:1-33
- Day 27: John 17:1-26
- Day 28: John 18:1-27
- Day 29: John 18:28 - 19:16
- Day 30: John 19:17-42
- Day 31: John 20:1-23
- Day 32: John 20:24-31
- Day 33: John 21:1-25

# THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

## John 1:

PROLOGUE: CHRIST, THE ETERNAL WORD

1 In the beginning the Word already existed.

The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He existed in the beginning with God.

3 God created everything through him,  
and nothing was created except through him.

4 The Word gave life to everything that was created,  
and his life brought light to everyone.

5 The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness can never extinguish it.

6 God sent a man, John the Baptist,\*7 to tell about the light so  
that everyone might believe because of his testimony.8 John  
himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about  
the light.9 The one who is the true light, who gives light to  
everyone, was coming into the world.

10 He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't  
recognize him.11 He came to his own people, and even they  
rejected him.12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he  
gave the right to become children of God.13 They are reborn—  
not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan,  
but a birth that comes from God.

14 So the Word became human\* and made his home among us.  
He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness.\* And we have seen  
his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

15 John testified about him when he shouted to the crowds,  
"This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is  
coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long  
before me.'"

16 From his abundance we have all received one gracious  
blessing after another.\*17 For the law was given through  
Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through  
Jesus Christ.18 No one has ever seen God. But the unique One,

who is himself God,\* is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

## THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

19 This was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Temple assistants\* from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?"<sup>20</sup> He came right out and said, "I am not the Messiah."

21 "Well then, who are you?" they asked. "Are you Elijah?"  
"No," he replied.

"Are you the Prophet we are expecting?"\*  
"No."

22 "Then who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?"

23 John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah:

"I am a voice shouting in the wilderness,  
'Clear the way for the LORD's coming!'"

24 Then the Pharisees who had been sent<sup>25</sup> asked him, "If you aren't the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, what right do you have to baptize?"

26 John told them, "I baptize with\* water, but right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognize.<sup>27</sup> Though his ministry follows mine, I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal."

28 This encounter took place in Bethany, an area east of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing.

## JESUS, THE LAMB OF GOD

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!<sup>30</sup> He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.'<sup>31</sup> I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel."

32 Then John testified, "I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a

dove from heaven and resting upon him.<sup>33</sup> I didn't know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'<sup>34</sup> I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.\*"

## THE FIRST DISCIPLES

35 The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples.<sup>36</sup> As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!"<sup>37</sup> When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus.

38 Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" he asked them. They replied, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

39 "Come and see," he said. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day.

40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus.<sup>41</sup> Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means "Christ"\*).

42 Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, "Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas" (which means "Peter"\*).

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, follow me."<sup>44</sup> Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown.

45 Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the very person Moses\* and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth."

46 "Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

"Come and see for yourself," Philip replied.

47 As they approached, Jesus said, "Now here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity."

48 "How do you know about me?" Nathanael asked.

Jesus replied, "I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you."

49 Then Nathaniel exclaimed, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!"

50 Jesus asked him, "Do you believe this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." 51 Then he said, "I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth.\*"

## John 2:

### THE WEDDING AT CANA

1 The next day\* there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,<sup>2</sup> and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration.<sup>3</sup> The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine."

4 "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

5 But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

6 Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons.\*<sup>7</sup> Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled,<sup>8</sup> he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions.

9 When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over.<sup>10</sup> "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!"

11 This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

12 After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples.

### JESUS CLEARS THE TEMPLE

13 It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem.14 In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money.15 Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables.16 Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!"

17 Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me."\*

18 But the Jewish leaders demanded, "What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it."

19 "All right," Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

20 "What!" they exclaimed. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?"21 But when Jesus said "this temple," he meant his own body.22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.

### JESUS AND NICODEMUS

23 Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him.24 But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew human nature.25 No one needed to tell him what mankind is really like.

## John 3:

1 There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee.2 After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you."

3 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again,\* you cannot see the Kingdom of God."

4 "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?"

5 Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit.\*6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.\*7 So don't be surprised when I say, 'You\* must be born again.'8 The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit."

9 "How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked.

10 Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things?11 I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe our testimony.12 But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things?13 No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man\* has come down from heaven.14 And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,15 so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.\*

16 "For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

18 "There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son.19 And the judgment

is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil.<sup>20</sup> All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed.<sup>21</sup> But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants.\*"

## JOHN THE BAPTIST EXALTS JESUS

22 Then Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and went into the Judean countryside. Jesus spent some time with them there, baptizing people.

23 At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there; and people kept coming to him for baptism.<sup>24</sup> (This was before John was thrown into prison.)<sup>25</sup> A debate broke out between John's disciples and a certain Jew\* over ceremonial cleansing.<sup>26</sup> So John's disciples came to him and said, "Rabbi, the man you met on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us."

27 John replied, "No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven.<sup>28</sup> You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.'<sup>29</sup> It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the best man is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows.

Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success.<sup>30</sup> He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.

31 "He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else.\*<sup>32</sup> He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them!<sup>33</sup> Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true.<sup>34</sup> For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit.<sup>35</sup> The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands.<sup>36</sup> And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey

the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."

## John 4:

### JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

1 Jesus\* knew the Pharisees had heard that he was baptizing and making more disciples than John<sup>2</sup> (though Jesus himself didn't baptize them—his disciples did).<sup>3</sup> So he left Judea and returned to Galilee.

4 He had to go through Samaria on the way.<sup>5</sup> Eventually he came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.<sup>6</sup> Jacob's well was there; and Jesus, tired from the long walk, sat wearily beside the well about noontime.<sup>7</sup> Soon a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink."<sup>8</sup> He was alone at the time because his disciples had gone into the village to buy some food.

9 The woman was surprised, for Jews refuse to have anything to do with Samaritans.\* She said to Jesus, "You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan woman. Why are you asking me for a drink?"

10 Jesus replied, "If you only knew the gift God has for you and who you are speaking to, you would ask me, and I would give you living water."

11 "But sir, you don't have a rope or a bucket," she said, "and this well is very deep. Where would you get this living water?<sup>12</sup> And besides, do you think you're greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this well? How can you offer better water than he and his sons and his animals enjoyed?"

13 Jesus replied, "Anyone who drinks this water will soon become thirsty again.<sup>14</sup> But those who drink the water I give will never be thirsty again. It becomes a fresh, bubbling spring within them, giving them eternal life."

15 "Please, sir," the woman said, "give me this water! Then I'll never be thirsty again, and I won't have to come here to get water."

16 "Go and get your husband," Jesus told her.

17 "I don't have a husband," the woman replied.

Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband—18 for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!"

19 "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet.20 So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim,\* where our ancestors worshiped?"

21 Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem.22 You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews.23 But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way.24 For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

25 The woman said, "I know the Messiah is coming—the one who is called Christ. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

26 Then Jesus told her, "I AM the Messiah!"\*

27 Just then his disciples came back. They were shocked to find him talking to a woman, but none of them had the nerve to ask, "What do you want with her?" or "Why are you talking to her?"28 The woman left her water jar beside the well and ran back to the village, telling everyone,29 "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?"30 So the people came streaming from the village to see him.

31 Meanwhile, the disciples were urging Jesus, "Rabbi, eat something."

32 But Jesus replied, "I have a kind of food you know nothing about."

33 "Did someone bring him food while we were gone?" the disciples asked each other.

34 Then Jesus explained: "My nourishment comes from doing the will of God, who sent me, and from finishing his work.<sup>35</sup> You know the saying, 'Four months between planting and harvest.' But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe\* for harvest.<sup>36</sup> The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike!<sup>37</sup> You know the saying, 'One plants and another harvests.' And it's true.<sup>38</sup> I sent you to harvest where you didn't plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest."

#### MANY SAMARITANS BELIEVE

39 Many Samaritans from the village believed in Jesus because the woman had said, "He told me everything I ever did!"<sup>40</sup> When they came out to see him, they begged him to stay in their village. So he stayed for two days,<sup>41</sup> long enough for many more to hear his message and believe.<sup>42</sup> Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not just because of what you told us, but because we have heard him ourselves. Now we know that he is indeed the Savior of the world."

#### JESUS HEALS AN OFFICIAL'S SON

43 At the end of the two days, Jesus went on to Galilee.<sup>44</sup> He himself had said that a prophet is not honored in his own hometown.<sup>45</sup> Yet the Galileans welcomed him, for they had been in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration and had seen everything he did there.

46 As he traveled through Galilee, he came to Cana, where he had turned the water into wine. There was a government official in nearby Capernaum whose son was very sick.<sup>47</sup> When he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and begged Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son, who was about to die.

48 Jesus asked, "Will you never believe in me unless you see miraculous signs and wonders?"

49 The official pleaded, "Lord, please come now before my little

boy dies."

50 Then Jesus told him, "Go back home. Your son will live!" And the man believed what Jesus said and started home.

51 While the man was on his way, some of his servants met him with the news that his son was alive and well.<sup>52</sup> He asked them when the boy had begun to get better, and they replied, "Yesterday afternoon at one o'clock his fever suddenly disappeared!"<sup>53</sup> Then the father realized that that was the very time Jesus had told him, "Your son will live." And he and his entire household believed in Jesus.<sup>54</sup> This was the second miraculous sign Jesus did in Galilee after coming from Judea.

## John 5:

### JESUS HEALS A LAME MAN

1 Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days.<sup>2</sup> Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda,\* with five covered porches.<sup>3</sup> Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches.\*<sup>5</sup> One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years.<sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, "Would you like to get well?"

7 "I can't, sir," the sick man said, "for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me."

8 Jesus told him, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!"

9 Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking! But this miracle happened on the Sabbath,<sup>10</sup> so the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, "You can't work on the Sabbath! The law doesn't allow you to carry that sleeping mat!"

11 But he replied, "The man who healed me told me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

12 "Who said such a thing as that?" they demanded.

13 The man didn't know, for Jesus had disappeared into the

crowd.<sup>14</sup> But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, "Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you."<sup>15</sup> Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him.

## JESUS CLAIMS TO BE THE SON OF GOD

<sup>16</sup> So the Jewish leaders began harassing\* Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules.<sup>17</sup> But Jesus replied, "My Father is always working, and so am I."<sup>18</sup> So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God.

<sup>19</sup> So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.<sup>20</sup> For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished.<sup>21</sup> For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge,<sup>23</sup> so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not honoring the Father who sent him.

<sup>24</sup> "I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life.

<sup>25</sup> "And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it's here now, when the dead will hear my voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live.<sup>26</sup> The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son.<sup>27</sup> And he has given him authority to judge everyone because he is the Son of Man.\*<sup>28</sup> Don't be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God's Son,<sup>29</sup> and they will rise again. Those who have

done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.<sup>30</sup> I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will.

## WITNESSES TO JESUS

31 "If I were to testify on my own behalf, my testimony would not be valid.<sup>32</sup> But someone else is also testifying about me, and I assure you that everything he says about me is true.<sup>33</sup> In fact, you sent investigators to listen to John the Baptist, and his testimony about me was true.<sup>34</sup> Of course, I have no need of human witnesses, but I say these things so you might be saved.<sup>35</sup> John was like a burning and shining lamp, and you were excited for a while about his message.<sup>36</sup> But I have a greater witness than John—my teachings and my miracles. The Father gave me these works to accomplish, and they prove that he sent me.<sup>37</sup> And the Father who sent me has testified about me himself. You have never heard his voice or seen him face to face,<sup>38</sup> and you do not have his message in your hearts, because you do not believe me—the one he sent to you.

39 "You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!<sup>40</sup> Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life.

41 "Your approval means nothing to me,<sup>42</sup> because I know you don't have God's love within you.<sup>43</sup> For I have come to you in my Father's name, and you have rejected me. Yet if others come in their own name, you gladly welcome them.<sup>44</sup> No wonder you can't believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don't care about the honor that comes from the one who alone is God.\*

45 "Yet it isn't I who will accuse you before the Father. Moses will accuse you! Yes, Moses, in whom you put your hopes.<sup>46</sup> If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me.<sup>47</sup> But since you don't believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?"

## John 6:

### JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND

1 After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias.2 A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick.3 Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him.4 (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.)5 Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?"6 He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do.

7 Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money\* to feed them!"

8 Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up.9 "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?"

10 "Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.)11 Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted.12 After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted."13 So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

14 When the people saw him\* do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!"\*15 When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself.

### JESUS WALKS ON WATER

16 That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him.17 But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn't come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward

Capernaum.18 Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough.19 They had rowed three or four miles\* when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified,20 but he called out to them, "Don't be afraid. I am here!\*"21 Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!

## JESUS, THE BREAD OF LIFE

22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them.23 Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten.24 So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him.25 They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

26 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs.27 But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man\* can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval."

28 They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?"

29 Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent."

30 They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do?31 After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'\*"32

32 Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven.33 The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

34 "Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day."

35 Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.36 But you haven't believed in me even though you have seen me.37 However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them.38 For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will.39 And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day.40 For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day."

41 Then the people\* began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven."42 They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

43 But Jesus replied, "Stop complaining about what I said.44 For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up.45 As it is written in the Scriptures,\* 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.46 (Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.)

47 "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life.48 Yes, I am the bread of life!49 Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died.50 Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die.51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh."

52 Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked.

53 So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you.54 But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at

the last day.<sup>55</sup> For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.<sup>56</sup> Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.<sup>57</sup> I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me.<sup>58</sup> I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever."

<sup>59</sup> He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

#### MANY DISCIPLES DESERT JESUS

<sup>60</sup> Many of his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?"

<sup>61</sup> Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, "Does this offend you?<sup>62</sup> Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again?<sup>63</sup> The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.<sup>64</sup> But some of you do not believe me." (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn't believe, and he knew who would betray him.)<sup>65</sup> Then he said, "That is why I said that people can't come to me unless the Father gives them to me."

<sup>66</sup> At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him.<sup>67</sup> Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?"

<sup>68</sup> Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life.<sup>69</sup> We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.\*"

<sup>70</sup> Then Jesus said, "I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil."<sup>71</sup> He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him.

## John 7:

### JESUS AND HIS BROTHERS

1 After this, Jesus traveled around Galilee. He wanted to stay out of Judea, where the Jewish leaders were plotting his death.<sup>2</sup> But soon it was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters,<sup>3</sup> and Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, where your followers can see your miracles!<sup>4</sup> You can't become famous if you hide like this! If you can do such wonderful things, show yourself to the world!"<sup>5</sup> For even his brothers didn't believe in him.

<sup>6</sup> Jesus replied, "Now is not the right time for me to go, but you can go anytime.<sup>7</sup> The world can't hate you, but it does hate me because I accuse it of doing evil.<sup>8</sup> You go on. I'm not going\* to this festival, because my time has not yet come."<sup>9</sup> After saying these things, Jesus remained in Galilee.

### JESUS TEACHES OPENLY AT THE TEMPLE

<sup>10</sup> But after his brothers left for the festival, Jesus also went, though secretly, staying out of public view.<sup>11</sup> The Jewish leaders tried to find him at the festival and kept asking if anyone had seen him.<sup>12</sup> There was a lot of grumbling about him among the crowds. Some argued, "He's a good man," but others said, "He's nothing but a fraud who deceives the people."<sup>13</sup> But no one had the courage to speak favorably about him in public, for they were afraid of getting in trouble with the Jewish leaders.

<sup>14</sup> Then, midway through the festival, Jesus went up to the Temple and began to teach.<sup>15</sup> The people\* were surprised when they heard him. "How does he know so much when he hasn't been trained?" they asked.

<sup>16</sup> So Jesus told them, "My message is not my own; it comes from God who sent me.<sup>17</sup> Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own.<sup>18</sup> Those who speak for themselves want glory only for themselves, but a person who seeks to honor the one who sent him speaks truth, not lies.<sup>19</sup> Moses gave you the law, but none

of you obeys it! In fact, you are trying to kill me."

20 The crowd replied, "You're demon possessed! Who's trying to kill you?"

21 Jesus replied, "I did one miracle on the Sabbath, and you were amazed.<sup>22</sup> But you work on the Sabbath, too, when you obey Moses' law of circumcision. (Actually, this tradition of circumcision began with the patriarchs, long before the law of Moses.)<sup>23</sup> For if the correct time for circumcising your son falls on the Sabbath, you go ahead and do it so as not to break the law of Moses. So why should you be angry with me for healing a man on the Sabbath?<sup>24</sup> Look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly."

#### IS JESUS THE MESSIAH?

25 Some of the people who lived in Jerusalem started to ask each other, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill?<sup>26</sup> But here he is, speaking in public, and they say nothing to him. Could our leaders possibly believe that he is the Messiah?<sup>27</sup> But how could he be? For we know where this man comes from. When the Messiah comes, he will simply appear; no one will know where he comes from."

28 While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he called out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I come from. But I'm not here on my own. The one who sent me is true, and you don't know him.<sup>29</sup> But I know him because I come from him, and he sent me to you."<sup>30</sup> Then the leaders tried to arrest him; but no one laid a hand on him, because his time\* had not yet come.

31 Many among the crowds at the Temple believed in him. "After all," they said, "would you expect the Messiah to do more miraculous signs than this man has done?"

32 When the Pharisees heard that the crowds were whispering such things, they and the leading priests sent Temple guards to arrest Jesus.<sup>33</sup> But Jesus told them, "I will be with you only a little longer. Then I will return to the one who sent me.<sup>34</sup> You will search for me but not find me. And you cannot go where I am going."

35 The Jewish leaders were puzzled by this statement. "Where is he planning to go?" they asked. "Is he thinking of leaving the country and going to the Jews in other lands?\*" Maybe he will even teach the Greeks!36 What does he mean when he says, 'You will search for me but not find me,' and 'You cannot go where I am going'?"

#### JESUS PROMISES LIVING WATER

37 On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me!38 Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'"\*39 (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given,\* because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

#### DIVISION AND UNBELIEF

40 When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared, "Surely this man is the Prophet we've been expecting."\*41 Others said, "He is the Messiah." Still others said, "But he can't be! Will the Messiah come from Galilee?42 For the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem, the village where King David was born."\*43 So the crowd was divided about him.44 Some even wanted him arrested, but no one laid a hand on him.

45 When the Temple guards returned without having arrested Jesus, the leading priests and Pharisees demanded, "Why didn't you bring him in?"

46 "We have never heard anyone speak like this!" the guards responded.

47 "Have you been led astray, too?" the Pharisees mocked.48 "Is there a single one of us rulers or Pharisees who believes in him?49 This foolish crowd follows him, but they are ignorant of the law. God's curse is on them!"

50 Then Nicodemus, the leader who had met with Jesus earlier, spoke up.<sup>51</sup> "Is it legal to convict a man before he is given a hearing?" he asked.

52 They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? Search the Scriptures and see for yourself—no prophet ever comes\* from Galilee!"

53 Then the meeting broke up, and everybody went home.

## John 8:

### A WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

1 Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives,<sup>2</sup> but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them.<sup>3</sup> As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd.

4 "Teacher," they said to Jesus, "this woman was caught in the act of adultery.<sup>5</sup> The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?"

6 They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger.<sup>7</sup> They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!"<sup>8</sup> Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

9 When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman.<sup>10</sup> Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?"

11 "No, Lord," she said.

And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

## JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

12 Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life."

13 The Pharisees replied, "You are making those claims about yourself! Such testimony is not valid."

14 Jesus told them, "These claims are valid even though I make them about myself. For I know where I came from and where I am going, but you don't know this about me. 15 You judge me by human standards, but I do not judge anyone. 16 And if I did, my judgment would be correct in every respect because I am not alone. The Father\* who sent me is with me. 17 Your own law says that if two people agree about something, their witness is accepted as fact. \*18 I am one witness, and my Father who sent me is the other."

19 "Where is your father?" they asked.

Jesus answered, "Since you don't know who I am, you don't know who my Father is. If you knew me, you would also know my Father." 20 Jesus made these statements while he was teaching in the section of the Temple known as the Treasury. But he was not arrested, because his time\* had not yet come.

## THE UNBELIEVING PEOPLE WARNED

21 Later Jesus said to them again, "I am going away. You will search for me but will die in your sin. You cannot come where I am going."

22 The people\* asked, "Is he planning to commit suicide? What does he mean, 'You cannot come where I am going'?"

23 Jesus continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You belong to this world; I do not. 24 That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I AM who I claim to be,\* you will die in your sins."

25 "Who are you?" they demanded.

Jesus replied, "The one I have always claimed to be. \*26 I have much to say about you and much to condemn, but I won't. For I say only what I have heard from the one who sent me, and he is

completely truthful."27 But they still didn't understand that he was talking about his Father.

28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the cross, then you will understand that I AM he.\* I do nothing on my own but say only what the Father taught me.29 And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him."30 Then many who heard him say these things believed in him.

## JESUS AND ABRAHAM

31 Jesus said to the people who believed in him, "You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings.32 And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

33 "But we are descendants of Abraham," they said. "We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, 'You will be set free'?"

34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin.35 A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever.36 So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free.37 Yes, I realize that you are descendants of Abraham. And yet some of you are trying to kill me because there's no room in your hearts for my message.38 I am telling you what I saw when I was with my Father. But you are following the advice of your father."

39 "Our father is Abraham!" they declared.

"No," Jesus replied, "for if you were really the children of Abraham, you would follow his example.\*40 Instead, you are trying to kill me because I told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham never did such a thing.41 No, you are imitating your real father."

They replied, "We aren't illegitimate children! God himself is our true Father."

42 Jesus told them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me.43 Why can't you understand what I am saying? It's because you can't even hear me!44 For you are the

children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.<sup>45</sup> So when I tell the truth, you just naturally don't believe me!<sup>46</sup> Which of you can truthfully accuse me of sin? And since I am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me?<sup>47</sup> Anyone who belongs to God listens gladly to the words of God. But you don't listen because you don't belong to God."

<sup>48</sup> The people retorted, "You Samaritan devil! Didn't we say all along that you were possessed by a demon?"

<sup>49</sup> "No," Jesus said, "I have no demon in me. For I honor my Father—and you dishonor me.<sup>50</sup> And though I have no wish to glorify myself, God is going to glorify me. He is the true judge.<sup>51</sup> I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!"

<sup>52</sup> The people said, "Now we know you are possessed by a demon. Even Abraham and the prophets died, but you say, 'Anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!'<sup>53</sup> Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

<sup>54</sup> Jesus answered, "If I want glory for myself, it doesn't count. But it is my Father who will glorify me. You say, 'He is our God,'<sup>55</sup> but you don't even know him. I know him. If I said otherwise, I would be as great a liar as you! But I do know him and obey him.<sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad."

<sup>57</sup> The people said, "You aren't even fifty years old. How can you say you have seen Abraham?\*"

<sup>58</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!\*"<sup>59</sup> At that point they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden from them and left the Temple.

## John 9:

### JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

1 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.<sup>2</sup> "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?"

3 "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him."<sup>4</sup> We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us.\* The night is coming, and then no one can work.<sup>5</sup> But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world."

6 Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man's eyes.<sup>7</sup> He told him, "Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam" (Siloam means "sent"). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

8 His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?"<sup>9</sup> Some said he was, and others said, "No, he just looks like him!"

But the beggar kept saying, "Yes, I am the same one!"

10 They asked, "Who healed you? What happened?"

11 He told them, "The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, 'Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.' So I went and washed, and now I can see!"

12 "Where is he now?" they asked.

"I don't know," he replied.

13 Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees,<sup>14</sup> because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him.<sup>15</sup> The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told them, "He put the mud over my eyes, and when I washed it away, I could see!"

16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man Jesus is not from God, for he is working on the Sabbath." Others said, "But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?" So there was a deep division of opinion among them.

17 Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, "What's your opinion about this man who healed you?"

The man replied, "I think he must be a prophet."

18 The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind and could now see, so they called in his parents. 19 They asked them, "Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?"

20 His parents replied, "We know this is our son and that he was born blind, 21 but we don't know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself." 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue. 23 That's why they said, "He is old enough. Ask him."

24 So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind and told him, "God should get the glory for this, \* because we know this man Jesus is a sinner."

25 "I don't know whether he is a sinner," the man replied. "But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!"

26 "But what did he do?" they asked. "How did he heal you?"

27 "Look!" the man exclaimed. "I told you once. Didn't you listen? Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?"

28 Then they cursed him and said, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses! 29 We know God spoke to Moses, but we don't even know where this man comes from."

30 "Why, that's very strange!" the man replied. "He healed my eyes, and yet you don't know where he comes from? 31 We know that God doesn't listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. 32 Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he couldn't have done it."

34 "You were born a total sinner!" they answered. "Are you trying to teach us?" And they threw him out of the synagogue.

## SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

35 When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?\*"

36 The man answered, "Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him."

37 "You have seen him," Jesus said, "and he is speaking to you!"

38 "Yes, Lord, I believe!" the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.

39 Then Jesus told him,\* "I entered this world to render judgment—to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see\* that they are blind."

40 Some Pharisees who were standing nearby heard him and asked, "Are you saying we're blind?"

41 "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty," Jesus replied. "But you remain guilty because you claim you can see."

## John 10:

### THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS SHEEP

1 "I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber!<sup>2</sup> But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.<sup>3</sup> The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.<sup>4</sup> After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice.<sup>5</sup> They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice."

6 Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant,<sup>7</sup> so he explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep.<sup>8</sup> All who came before me\* were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them.<sup>9</sup> Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved.\* They will come and go freely and will find good pastures.<sup>10</sup> The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life."

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.12 A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock.13 The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.

14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me,15 just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep.16 I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

17 "The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again.18 No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."

19 When he said these things, the people\* were again divided in their opinions about him.20 Some said, "He's demon possessed and out of his mind. Why listen to a man like that?"21 Others said, "This doesn't sound like a man possessed by a demon! Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

## JESUS CLAIMS TO BE THE SON OF GOD

22 It was now winter, and Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication.23 He was in the Temple, walking through the section known as Solomon's Colonnade.24 The people surrounded him and asked, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

25 Jesus replied, "I have already told you, and you don't believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father's name.26 But you don't believe me because you are not my sheep.27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me,29 for my Father has given them to me, and

he is more powerful than anyone else.\* No one can snatch them from the Father's hand.<sup>30</sup> The Father and I are one."

<sup>31</sup> Once again the people picked up stones to kill him.<sup>32</sup> Jesus said, "At my Father's direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?"

<sup>33</sup> They replied, "We're stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God."

<sup>34</sup> Jesus replied, "It is written in your own Scriptures\* that God said to certain leaders of the people, 'I say, you are gods!'<sup>35</sup> And you know that the Scriptures cannot be altered. So if those people who received God's message were called 'gods,'<sup>36</sup> why do you call it blasphemy when I say, 'I am the Son of God'? After all, the Father set me apart and sent me into the world.<sup>37</sup> Don't believe me unless I carry out my Father's work.<sup>38</sup> But if I do his work, believe in the evidence of the miraculous works I have done, even if you don't believe me. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father."

<sup>39</sup> Once again they tried to arrest him, but he got away and left them.<sup>40</sup> He went beyond the Jordan River near the place where John was first baptizing and stayed there awhile.<sup>41</sup> And many followed him. "John didn't perform miraculous signs," they remarked to one another, "but everything he said about this man has come true."<sup>42</sup> And many who were there believed in Jesus.

## John 11:

### THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

<sup>1</sup> A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha.<sup>2</sup> This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair.\* Her brother, Lazarus, was sick.<sup>3</sup> So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

<sup>4</sup> But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness

will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this."<sup>5</sup> So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus,<sup>6</sup> he stayed where he was for the next two days.<sup>7</sup> Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

8 But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago the people\* in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?"

9 Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world.<sup>10</sup> But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light."<sup>11</sup> Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up."

12 The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!"<sup>13</sup> They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

14 So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead.<sup>15</sup> And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come, let's go see him."

16 Thomas, nicknamed the Twin,\* said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go, too—and die with Jesus."

17 When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days.<sup>18</sup> Bethany was only a few miles\* down the road from Jerusalem,<sup>19</sup> and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss.<sup>20</sup> When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house.<sup>21</sup> Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died.<sup>22</sup> But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask."

23 Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."

25 Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life.\* Anyone

who believes in me will live, even after dying.<sup>26</sup> Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

27 "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God."<sup>28</sup> Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you."<sup>29</sup> So Mary immediately went to him.

30 Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him.<sup>31</sup> When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there.<sup>32</sup> When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."

33 When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him,\* and he was deeply troubled.<sup>34</sup> "Where have you put him?" he asked them. They told him, "Lord, come and see."<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus wept.<sup>36</sup> The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!"<sup>37</sup> But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

38 Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance.<sup>39</sup> "Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible."

40 Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?"<sup>41</sup> So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me.<sup>42</sup> You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me."<sup>43</sup> Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!"<sup>44</sup> And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Unwrap him and let him go!"

## THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

45 Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen.46 But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.47 Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council\* together. "What are we going to do?" they asked each other. "This man certainly performs many miraculous signs.48 If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both our Temple\* and our nation."

49 Caiaphas, who was high priest at that time,\* said, "You don't know what you're talking about!50 You don't realize that it's better for you that one man should die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed."

51 He did not say this on his own; as high priest at that time he was led to prophesy that Jesus would die for the entire nation.52 And not only for that nation, but to bring together and unite all the children of God scattered around the world.

53 So from that time on, the Jewish leaders began to plot Jesus' death.54 As a result, Jesus stopped his public ministry among the people and left Jerusalem. He went to a place near the wilderness, to the village of Ephraim, and stayed there with his disciples.

55 It was now almost time for the Jewish Passover celebration, and many people from all over the country arrived in Jerusalem several days early so they could go through the purification ceremony before Passover began.56 They kept looking for Jesus, but as they stood around in the Temple, they said to each other, "What do you think? He won't come for Passover, will he?"57 Meanwhile, the leading priests and Pharisees had publicly ordered that anyone seeing Jesus must report it immediately so they could arrest him.

## John 12:

### JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

1 Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived

in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead.<sup>2</sup> A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate\* with him.<sup>3</sup> Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar\* of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance.

<sup>4</sup> But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said,<sup>5</sup> "That perfume was worth a year's wages.\* It should have been sold and the money given to the poor."<sup>6</sup> Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself.

<sup>7</sup> Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial.<sup>8</sup> You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

<sup>9</sup> When all the people\* heard of Jesus' arrival, they flocked to see him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead.<sup>10</sup> Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too,<sup>11</sup> for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them\* and believed in Jesus.

## JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

<sup>12</sup> The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors<sup>13</sup> took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted,

"Praise God!

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD!

Hail to the King of Israel!"\*

<sup>14</sup> Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said:

<sup>15</sup> "Don't be afraid, people of Jerusalem.

Look, your King is coming,

riding on a donkey's colt."

<sup>16</sup> His disciples didn't understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these

things had been written about him.

17 Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others\* about it.18 That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they had heard about this miraculous

sign.19 Then the Pharisees said to each other, "There's nothing

we can do. Look, everyone\* has gone after him!"

## JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

20 Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration21 paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, "Sir, we want to meet Jesus."22 Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus.

23 Jesus replied, "Now the time has come for the Son of Man\* to enter into his glory.24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.25 Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity.26 Anyone who wants to be my disciple must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.

27 "Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'Father, save me from this hour'? But this is the very reason I came!28 Father, bring glory to your name."

Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, "I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again."29 When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him.

30 Then Jesus told them, "The voice was for your benefit, not mine.31 The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out.32 And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself."33 He said this to indicate how he was going to die.

34 The crowd responded, "We understood from Scripture\* that the Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man

will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?"

35 Jesus replied, "My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going.<sup>36</sup> Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light."

After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them.

## THE UNBELIEF OF THE PEOPLE

37 But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him.<sup>38</sup> This is exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted: "LORD, who has believed our message?

To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?"

39 But the people couldn't believe, for as Isaiah also said,

40 "The Lord has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts—

so that their eyes cannot see, and their hearts cannot understand,

and they cannot turn to me and have me heal them."

41 Isaiah was referring to Jesus when he said this, because he saw the future and spoke of the Messiah's glory.<sup>42</sup> Many people did believe in him, however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn't admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue.<sup>43</sup> For they loved human praise more than the praise of God.

44 Jesus shouted to the crowds, "If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me.<sup>45</sup> For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me.<sup>46</sup> I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark.<sup>47</sup> I will not judge those who hear me but don't obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it.<sup>48</sup> But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken.<sup>49</sup> I don't speak on my own authority. The Father

who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it.<sup>50</sup> And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells me to say."

## John 13:

### JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

1 Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end.\*<sup>2</sup> It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas,\* son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.<sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God.<sup>4</sup> So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist,<sup>5</sup> and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

6 When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

8 "No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!" Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

9 Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

10 Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet,\* to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you."<sup>11</sup> For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

12 After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing?<sup>13</sup> You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am.<sup>14</sup> And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed

your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet.15 I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.16 I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message.17 Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

#### JESUS PREDICTS HIS BETRAYAL

18 "I am not saying these things to all of you; I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that says, 'The one who eats my food has turned against me.'\*19 I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I AM the Messiah.\*20 I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me."

21 Now Jesus was deeply troubled,\* and he exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!"

22 The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean.23 The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table.\*24 Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, "Who's he talking about?"25 So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, "Lord, who is it?"

26 Jesus responded, "It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl."And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot.27 When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, "Hurry and do what you're going to do."28 None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant.29 Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor.30 So Judas left at once, going out into the night.

#### JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL

31 As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, "The time has come for the Son of Man\* to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him.32 And since God receives glory

because of the Son,\* he will soon give glory to the Son.<sup>33</sup> Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can't come where I am going.<sup>34</sup> So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.<sup>35</sup> Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

36 Simon Peter asked, "Lord, where are you going?"

And Jesus replied, "You can't go with me now, but you will follow me later."

37 "But why can't I come now, Lord?" he asked. "I'm ready to die for you."

38 Jesus answered, "Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter—before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.

## John 14:

### JESUS, THE WAY TO THE FATHER

1 "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me.<sup>2</sup> There is more than enough room in my Father's home.\* If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?\*" <sup>3</sup> When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.<sup>4</sup> And you know the way to where I am going."

5 "No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

6 Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.<sup>7</sup> If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is.\* From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"

8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

9 Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to

you?10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me.11 Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

12 "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.13 You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father.14 Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

### JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY SPIRIT

15 "If you love me, obey\* my commandments.16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,\* who will never leave you.17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you.18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.19 Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live.20 When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.21 Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them."

22 Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, "Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?"

23 Jesus replied, "All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them.24 Anyone who doesn't love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me.25 I am telling you these things now while I am still with you.26 But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have

told you.

27 "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid.<sup>28</sup> Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am.<sup>29</sup> I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

30 "I don't have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me,<sup>31</sup> but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let's be going.

## John 15:

### JESUS, THE TRUE VINE

1 "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener.<sup>2</sup> He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more.<sup>3</sup> You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you.<sup>4</sup> Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

5 "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.<sup>6</sup> Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned.<sup>7</sup> But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!<sup>8</sup> When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

9 "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love.<sup>10</sup> When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love.<sup>11</sup> I have told you these things so that you will be

filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!<sup>12</sup> This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.<sup>13</sup> There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.<sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command.<sup>15</sup> I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.<sup>16</sup> You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.<sup>17</sup> This is my command: Love each other.

#### THE WORLD'S HATRED

<sup>18</sup> "If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first.<sup>19</sup> The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you.<sup>20</sup> Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you.<sup>21</sup> They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me.<sup>22</sup> They would not be guilty if I had not come and spoken to them. But now they have no excuse for their sin.<sup>23</sup> Anyone who hates me also hates my Father.<sup>24</sup> If I hadn't done such miraculous signs among them that no one else could do, they would not be guilty. But as it is, they have seen everything I did, yet they still hate me and my Father.<sup>25</sup> This fulfills what is written in their Scriptures\*: 'They hated me without cause.'

<sup>26</sup> "But I will send you the Advocate\*—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me.<sup>27</sup> And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.

## John 16:

1 "I have told you these things so that you won't abandon your faith.<sup>2</sup> For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God.<sup>3</sup> This is because they have never known the Father or me.<sup>4</sup> Yes, I'm telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember my warning. I didn't tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for a while longer.

### THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

5 "But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going.<sup>6</sup> Instead, you grieve because of what I've told you.<sup>7</sup> But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate\* won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you.<sup>8</sup> And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment.<sup>9</sup> The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me.<sup>10</sup> Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more.<sup>11</sup> Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

12 "There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now.<sup>13</sup> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.<sup>14</sup> He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.<sup>15</sup> All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'

### SADNESS WILL BE TURNED TO JOY

16 "In a little while you won't see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again."

17 Some of the disciples asked each other, "What does he mean when he says, 'In a little while you won't see me, but then you will see me,' and 'I am going to the Father'?"<sup>18</sup> And what does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand."

19 Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, "Are you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you won't see me, but a little while after that you will see me again.<sup>20</sup> I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy.<sup>21</sup> It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world.<sup>22</sup> So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy.<sup>23</sup> At that time you won't need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name.<sup>24</sup> You haven't done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.

25 "I have spoken of these matters in figures of speech, but soon I will stop speaking figuratively and will tell you plainly all about the Father.<sup>26</sup> Then you will ask in my name. I'm not saying I will ask the Father on your behalf,<sup>27</sup> for the Father himself loves you dearly because you love me and believe that I came from God.\*<sup>28</sup> Yes, I came from the Father into the world, and now I will leave the world and return to the Father."

29 Then his disciples said, "At last you are speaking plainly and not figuratively.<sup>30</sup> Now we understand that you know everything, and there's no need to question you. From this we believe that you came from God."

31 Jesus asked, "Do you finally believe?<sup>32</sup> But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me.<sup>33</sup> I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

# John 17:

## THE PRAYER OF JESUS

1 After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you.<sup>2</sup> For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him.<sup>3</sup> And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.<sup>4</sup> I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.<sup>5</sup> Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

6 "I have revealed you\* to the ones you gave me from this world. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word.<sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you,<sup>8</sup> for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me.

9 "My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you.<sup>10</sup> All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory.<sup>11</sup> Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name;\* now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are.<sup>12</sup> During my time here, I protected them by the power of the name you gave me.\* I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold.

13 "Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy.<sup>14</sup> I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.<sup>15</sup> I'm not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one.<sup>16</sup> They do not belong to this world any more than I do.<sup>17</sup> Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth.<sup>18</sup> Just as you sent me

into the world, I am sending them into the world.<sup>19</sup> And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth.

<sup>20</sup> "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message.<sup>21</sup> I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

<sup>22</sup> "I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one.<sup>23</sup> I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.<sup>24</sup> Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

<sup>25</sup> "O righteous Father, the world doesn't know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me.<sup>26</sup> I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them."

## John 18:

### JESUS IS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED

<sup>1</sup> After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees.<sup>2</sup> Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples.<sup>3</sup> The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

<sup>4</sup> Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. "Who are you looking for?" he asked.

<sup>5</sup> "Jesus the Nazarene,"\* they replied.

"I AM he,"\* Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing

with them.)<sup>6</sup> As Jesus said "I AM he," they all drew back and fell to the ground!<sup>7</sup> Once more he asked them, "Who are you looking for?"

And again they replied, "Jesus the Nazarene."

<sup>8</sup> "I told you that I AM he," Jesus said. "And since I am the one you want, let these others go."<sup>9</sup> He did this to fulfill his own statement: "I did not lose a single one of those you have given me."<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave.<sup>11</sup> But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?"

#### JESUS AT THE HIGH PRIEST'S HOUSE

<sup>12</sup> So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up.<sup>13</sup> First they took him to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time.<sup>\*</sup><sup>14</sup> Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, "It's better that one man should die for the people."

#### PETER'S FIRST DENIAL

<sup>15</sup> Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest's courtyard with Jesus.<sup>16</sup> Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in.<sup>17</sup> The woman asked Peter, "You're not one of that man's disciples, are you?"

"No," he said, "I am not."

<sup>18</sup> Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves, and Peter stood with them, warming himself.

#### THE HIGH PRIEST QUESTIONS JESUS

<sup>19</sup> Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and what he had been teaching them.<sup>20</sup> Jesus

replied, "Everyone knows what I teach. I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the Temple, where the people\* gather. I have not spoken in secret.<sup>21</sup> Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said."

22 Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. "Is that the way to answer the high priest?" he demanded.

23 Jesus replied, "If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I'm speaking the truth, why are you beating me?"

24 Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

#### PETER'S SECOND AND THIRD DENIALS

25 Meanwhile, as Simon Peter was standing by the fire warming himself, they asked him again, "You're not one of his disciples, are you?"

He denied it, saying, "No, I am not."

26 But one of the household slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Didn't I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?"<sup>27</sup> Again Peter denied it. And immediately a rooster crowed.

#### JESUS' TRIAL BEFORE PILATE

28 Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor.\* His accusers didn't go inside because it would defile them, and they wouldn't be allowed to celebrate the Passover.<sup>29</sup> So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, "What is your charge against this man?"

30 "We wouldn't have handed him over to you if he weren't a criminal!" they retorted.

31 "Then take him away and judge him by your own law," Pilate told them.

"Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone," the Jewish leaders replied.<sup>32</sup> (This fulfilled Jesus' prediction about the way he would die.\*)

33 Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked him.

34 Jesus replied, "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?"

35 "Am I a Jew?" Pilate retorted. "Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?"

36 Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."

37 Pilate said, "So you are a king?"

Jesus responded, "You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true."

38 "What is truth?" Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, "He is not guilty of any crime.<sup>39</sup> But you have a custom of asking me to release one prisoner each year at Passover. Would you like me to release this 'King of the Jews'?"

40 But they shouted back, "No! Not this man. We want Barabbas!" (Barabbas was a revolutionary.)

## John 19:

### JESUS SENTENCED TO DEATH

1 Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip.<sup>2</sup> The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him.<sup>3</sup> "Hail! King of the Jews!" they mocked, as they slapped him across the face.

4 Pilate went outside again and said to the people, "I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty."<sup>5</sup> Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, "Look, here is the man!"

6 When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

"Take him yourselves and crucify him," Pilate said. "I find him not guilty."

7 The Jewish leaders replied, "By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God."

8 When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever.<sup>9</sup> He took Jesus back into the headquarters\* again and asked him, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer.<sup>10</sup> "Why don't you talk to me?" Pilate demanded. "Don't you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?"  
11 Then Jesus said, "You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

12 Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, "If you release this man, you are no 'friend of Caesar.'\* Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar."

13 When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, *Gabbatha*).<sup>14</sup> It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people,\* "Look, here is your king!"

15 "Away with him," they yelled. "Away with him! Crucify him!" "What? Crucify your king?" Pilate asked.  
"We have no king but Caesar," the leading priests shouted back.  
16 Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

## THE CRUCIFIXION

So they took Jesus away.<sup>17</sup> Carrying the cross by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, *Golgotha*).<sup>18</sup> There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them.<sup>19</sup> And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, "Jesus of Nazareth,\* the King of the Jews."<sup>20</sup> The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so that many people could read it.  
21 Then the leading priests objected and said to Pilate, "Change it from 'The King of the Jews' to 'He said, I am King of the

Jews."

22 Pilate replied, "No, what I have written, I have written."

23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.24 So they said, "Rather than tearing it apart, let's throw dice\* for it." This fulfilled the Scripture that says, "They divided my garments among themselves and threw dice for my clothing."\* So that is what they did.

25 Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene.26 When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son."27 And he said to this disciple, "Here is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

## THE DEATH OF JESUS

28 Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, "I am thirsty."\*29 A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips.30 When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and released his spirit.

31 It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was the Passover). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down.32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus.33 But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs.34 One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out.35 (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also can believe.\*)36 These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, "Not one of his bones will be broken,"\*37 and "They will look on the one

they pierced."\*

## THE BURIAL OF JESUS

38 Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus' body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away.39 With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds\* of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes.40 Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth.41 The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before.42 And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover\* and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

## John 20:

### THE RESURRECTION

1 Early on Sunday morning,\* while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.2 She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

3 Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb.4 They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.5 He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in.6 Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there,7 while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings.8 Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—9 for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead.10 Then they went home.

## JESUS APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE

11 Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in.12 She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying.13 "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her.

"Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."

14 She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him.15 "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?" She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

16 "Mary!" Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

17 "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

18 Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message.

## JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES

19 That Sunday evening\* the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! "Peace be with you," he said.20 As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!21 Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."22 Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.23 If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

## JESUS APPEARS TO THOMAS

24 One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin),\* was not with the others when Jesus came.<sup>25</sup> They told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side."

26 Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said.<sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!"

28 "My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed.

29 Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."

## PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

30 The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book.<sup>31</sup> But these are written so that you may continue to believe\* that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

## John 21:

### EPILOGUE: JESUS APPEARS TO SEVEN DISCIPLES

1 Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee.\* This is how it happened.<sup>2</sup> Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin),\* Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples.

3 Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing."

"We'll come, too," they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night.

4 At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples

couldn't see who he was.<sup>5</sup> He called out, "Fellows,\* have you caught any fish?"

"No," they replied.

<sup>6</sup> Then he said, "Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you'll get some!" So they did, and they couldn't haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.

<sup>7</sup> Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore.<sup>8</sup> The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards\* from shore.<sup>9</sup> When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

<sup>10</sup> "Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus said.<sup>11</sup> So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn't torn.

<sup>12</sup> "Now come and have some breakfast!" Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish.<sup>14</sup> This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.

<sup>15</sup> After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?\*" "

"Yes, Lord," Peter replied, "you know I love you."

"Then feed my lambs," Jesus told him.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus repeated the question: "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter said, "you know I love you."

"Then take care of my sheep," Jesus said.

<sup>17</sup> A third time he asked him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Then feed my sheep.

<sup>18</sup> "I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to

do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others\* will dress you and take you where you don't want to go."19 Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, "Follow me."

20 Peter turned around and saw behind them the disciple Jesus loved—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, "Lord, who will betray you?"21 Peter asked Jesus, "What about him, Lord?"

22 Jesus replied, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me."23 So the rumor spread among the community of believers\* that this disciple wouldn't die. But that isn't what Jesus said at all. He only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

24 This disciple is the one who testifies to these events and has recorded them here. And we know that his account of these things is accurate.

25 Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written.

# READ THE BIBLE IN A YEAR

Read the books of the Bible (one day at a time) as they were written historically, according to the estimated date of their writing.

- Genesis 1-3
- Genesis 4-7
- Genesis 8-11
- Genesis 12-15
- Genesis 16-18
- Genesis 19-21
- Genesis 22-24
- Genesis 25-26
- Genesis 27-29
- Genesis 30-31
- Genesis 32-34
- Genesis 35-37
- Genesis 38-40
- Genesis 41-42
- Genesis 43-45
- Genesis 46-47
- Genesis 48-50
- Exodus 1-3
- Exodus 4-6
- Exodus 7-9
- Exodus 10-12
- Exodus 13-15
- Exodus 16-18
- Exodus 19-21
- Exodus 22-24
- Exodus 25-27
- Exodus 28-29
- Exodus 30-32
- Exodus 33-35
- Exodus 36-38
- Exodus 39-40
- Leviticus 1-4
- Leviticus 5-7
- Leviticus 8-10
- Leviticus 11-13
- Leviticus 14-15
- Leviticus 16-18
- Leviticus 19-21
- Leviticus 22-23
- Leviticus 24-25
- Leviticus 26-27
- Numbers 1-2
- Numbers 3-4
- Numbers 5-6
- Numbers 7
- Numbers 8-10
- Numbers 11-13
- Numbers 14-15
- Numbers 16-17
- Numbers 18-20
- Numbers 21-22
- Numbers 23-25
- Numbers 26-27
- Numbers 28-30
- Numbers 31-32
- Numbers 33-34
- Numbers 35-36
- Deuteronomy 1-2
- Deuteronomy 3-4
- Deuteronomy 5-7

- Deuteronomy 8-10
- Deuteronomy 11-13
- Deuteronomy 14-16
- Deuteronomy 17-20
- Deuteronomy 21-23
- Deuteronomy 24-27
- Deuteronomy 28-29
- Deuteronomy 30-31
- Deuteronomy 32-34
- Joshua 1-4
- Joshua 5-8
- Joshua 9-11
- Joshua 12-15
- Joshua 16-18
- Joshua 19-21
- Joshua 22-24
- Judges 1-2
- Judges 3-5
- Judges 6-7
- Judges 8-9
- Judges 10-12
- Judges 13-15
- Judges 16-18
- Judges 19-21
- 1 Samuel 1-3
- 1 Samuel 4-8
- 1 Samuel 9-12
- 1 Samuel 13-14
- 1 Samuel 15-17
- 1 Samuel 18-20
- 1 Samuel 21-24
- 1 Samuel 25-27
- 1 Samuel 28-31
- 2 Samuel 1-3
- 2 Samuel 4-6
- 2 Samuel 7-10
- 2 Samuel 11-13
- 2 Samuel 14-15
- 2 Samuel 16-18
- 2 Samuel 19-21
- 2 Samuel 22-24
- 1 Kings 1-2
- 1 Kings 3-5
- 1 Kings 6-7
- 1 Kings 8-9
- 1 Kings 10-11
- 1 Kings 12-14
- 1 Kings 15-17
- 1 Kings 18-20
- 1 Kings 21-22
- 2 Kings 1-4
- 2 Kings 5-8
- 2 King 9-11
- 2 King 12-14
- 2 King 15-17
- 2 King 18-19
- 2 King 20-22
- 2 King 23-25
- Isaiah 1-4
- Isaiah 5-8
- Isaiah 9-12
- Isaiah 13-17
- Isaiah 18-22
- Isaiah 23-27
- Isaiah 28-30
- Isaiah 31-35
- Isaiah 36-41
- Isaiah 42-44

- Isaiah 45-48
- Isaiah 49-53
- Isaiah 54-58
- Isaiah 59-63
- Isaiah 64-66
- Jeremiah 1-3
- Jeremiah 4-6
- Jeremiah 7-9
- Jeremiah 10-13
- Jeremiah 14-17
- Jeremiah 18-22
- Jeremiah 23-25
- Jeremiah 26-29
- Jeremiah 30-31
- Jeremiah 32-34
- Jeremiah 35-37
- Jeremiah 38-41
- Jeremiah 42-45
- Jeremiah 46-48
- Jeremiah 49-50
- Jeremiah 51-52
- Ezekiel 1-3
- Ezekiel 4-7
- Ezekiel 8-10
- Ezekiel 11-12
- Ezekiel 13-15
- Ezekiel 16-17
- Ezekiel 18-20
- Ezekiel 21-23
- Ezekiel 24-27
- Ezekiel 28-31
- Ezekiel 32-34
- Ezekiel 35-38
- Ezekiel 39-41
- Ezekiel 42-43
- Ezekiel 44-45
- Ezekiel 46-48
- Hosea 1-7
- Hosea 8-14
- Joel
- Amos 1-5
- Amos 6-9
- Obadiah; Jonah
- Micah 1-7
- Nahum; Habakkuk
- Zephaniah; Haggai
- Zechariah 1-7
- Zechariah 8-14
- Malachi 1-4
- Psalms 1-8
- Psalms 9-16
- Psalms 17-20
- Psalms 21-25
- Psalms 26-31
- Psalms 32-35
- Psalms 36-39
- Psalms 40-45
- Psalms 46-50
- Psalms 51-57
- Psalms 58-65
- Psalms 66-69
- Psalms 70-73
- Psalms 74-77
- Psalms 78-79
- Psalms 80-85
- Psalms 86-89
- Psalms 90-95
- Psalms 96-102

- Psalms 103-105
- Psalms 106-107
- Psalms 108-114
- Psalms 115-118
- Psalms 119:1-88
- Psalms 119:89-176
- Psalms 120-132
- Psalms 133-139
- Psalms 140-145
- Psalms 146-150
- Proverbs 1-3
- Proverbs 4-6
- Proverbs 7-9
- Proverbs 10-12
- Proverbs 13-15
- Proverbs 16-18
- Proverbs 19-21
- Proverbs 22-23
- Proverbs 24-26
- Proverbs 27-29
- Proverbs 30-31
- Job 1-5
- Job 6-9
- Job 10-13
- Job 14-16
- Job 17-20
- Job 21-23
- Job 24-28
- Job 29-31
- Job 32-34
- Job 35-37
- Job 38-39
- Job 40-42
- Solomon 1-8
- Ruth
- Lamentations 1-3:36
- Lamentations 3:37-5:22
- Ecclesiastes 1-4
- Ecclesiastes 5-8
- Ecclesiastes 9-12
- Esther 1-3
- Esther 4-6
- Esther 7-10
- Daniel 1-2
- Daniel 3-4
- Daniel 5-6
- Daniel 7-8
- Daniel 9-10
- Daniel 11-12
- Ezra 1-2
- Ezra 3-5
- Ezra 6-7
- Ezra 8-10
- Nehemiah 1-3
- Nehemiah 4-6
- Nehemiah 7-8
- Nehemiah 9-11
- Nehemiah 12-13
- 1 Chronicles 1-2
- 1 Chronicles 3-5
- 1 Chronicles 6
- 1 Chronicles 7-8
- 1 Chronicles 9-10
- 1 Chronicles 11-12
- 1 Chronicles 13-15
- 1 Chronicles 16-17
- 1 Chronicles 18-20
- 1 Chronicles 21-23

- 1 Chronicles 24-25
- 1 Chronicles 26-27
- 1 Chronicles 28-29
- 2 Chronicles 1-4
- 2 Chronicles 5-7
- 2 Chronicles 8-10
- 2 Chronicles 11-14
- 2 Chronicles 15-18
- 2 Chronicles 19-21
- 2 Chronicles 22-24
- 2 Chronicles 25-27
- 2 Chronicles 28-29
- 2 Chronicles 30-32
- 2 Chronicles 33-34
- 2 Chronicles 35-36
- James 1-5
- Galatians 1-3
- Galatians 4-6
- 1 Thessalonians 1-5
- 2 Thessalonians 1-3
- 1 Corinthians 1-4
- 1 Corinthians 5-8
- 1 Corinthians 9-11
- 1 Corinthians 12-14
- 1 Corinthians 15-16
- 2 Corinthians 1-4
- 2 Corinthians 5-9
- 2 Corinthians 10-13
- Romans 1-3
- Romans 4-7
- Romans 8-10
- Romans 11-13
- Romans 14-16
- Matthew 1-4
- Matthew 5-7
- Matthew 8-9
- Matthew 10-12
- Matthew 13-14
- Matthew 15-17
- Matthew 18-20
- Matthew 21-22
- Matthew 23-24
- Matthew 25-26
- Matthew 27-28
- Mark 1-3
- Mark 4-5
- Mark 6-7
- Mark 8-9
- Mark 10-11
- Mark 12-13
- Mark 14
- Mark 15-16
- Luke 1
- Luke 2-3
- Luke 4-5
- Luke 6-7
- Luke 8-9
- Luke 10-11
- Luke 12-13
- Luke 14-16
- Luke 17-18
- Luke 19-20
- Luke 21-22
- Luke 23-24
- Eph 1-3
- Eph 4-6
- Colossians; Philemon
- Philippians 1-4

- Acts 1-3
- Acts 4-6
- Acts 7-8
- Acts 9-10
- Acts 11-13
- Acts 14-16
- Acts 17-19
- Acts 20-22
- Acts 23-25
- Acts 26-28
- 1 Timothy
- Titus
- 1 Peter 1-5
- Hebrews 1-6
- Hebrews 7-10
- Hebrews 11-13
- 2 Timothy
- 2 Peter; Judges
- John 1-2
- John 3-4
- John 5-6
- John 7-8
- John 9-10
- John 11-12
- John 13-15
- John 16-18
- John 19-21
- 1 John 1-5
- 2 John; 3 John
- Revelations 1-5
- Revelations 6-11
- Revelations 12-18
- Revelations 19-22

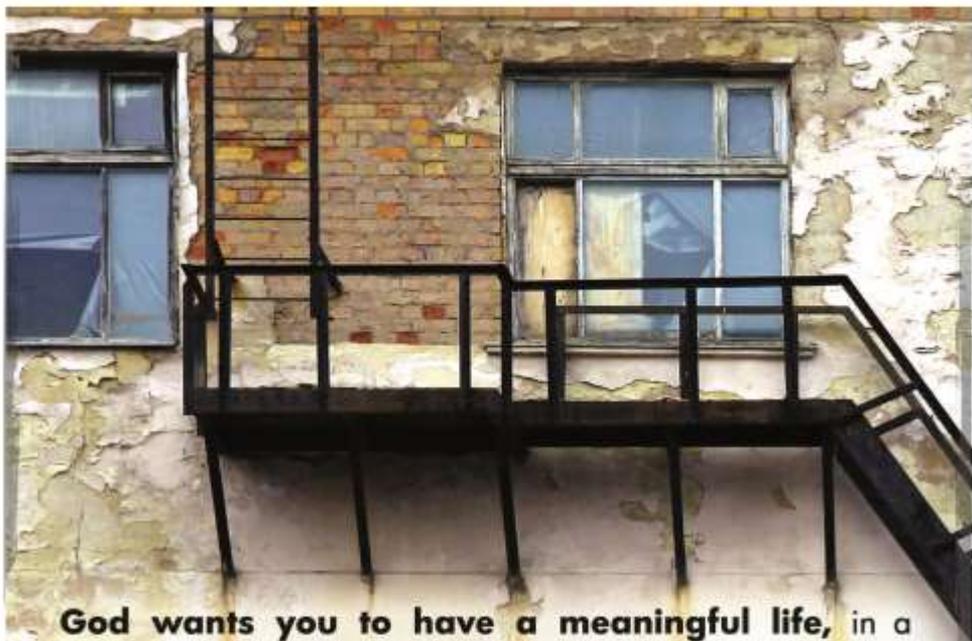












**God wants you to have a meaningful life,** in a relationship with Him through His son, Jesus. But He doesn't force that desire on you. He gives you a choice...

On your own there is nothing you can do to bring yourself into a right relationship with God. Good works won't do it. Religion won't do it. Morality won't do it. Neither will money nor philosophy nor knowledge nor science. This book is designed to help you get started on your journey, with five steps that will help you get started in:

- Studying your Bible
- Praying to God
- Discovering meaningful friendships
- Experiencing baptism
- Living a Life of Worship

God says in the Bible that anyone who belongs to Jesus has become a new person...a new life has begun! If you asked Jesus to forgive you of your sins and come into your life, then, according to God Himself, you are a new creation! As of right now, real life starts.