

The First Easter

Jesus said to his disciples, "As you know, the Passover is two days away--**and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.**"

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. "But not during the Feast," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people."

While Jesus was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head. Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. She did what she could. **She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial.** I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

Then one of the twelve--the one called Judas Iscariot--went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus, asking, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" They were delighted and **they counted out for him thirty silver coins.** From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "**Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.**" "Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked. He replied, "**As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house. Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'** He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. **Make preparations for us there.**" Peter and John left, went into the city and **found things just as Jesus had told them.** So they prepared the Passover.

It was just before the passover feast. **Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.** Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.

The evening meal was being served, and the Devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon to betray Jesus. **Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God,** so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he filled a basin with water and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus replied, "**You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.**"

"No," said Peter, "You shall never wash my feet!"

Jesus answered, "**If I do not wash you, you have no part with me.**"

"Then Lord," Peter replied, "not just my feet, but my hands and my head as well!"

Jesus answered, "**A person who has had a bath only needs to wash his feet. His whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.**" For **Jesus knew who was going to betray him.** That is why he said not every one was clean.

When he had finished washing his disciples' feet, he put his clothes on and returned to his place. "**Do you understand what I have done for you?**" he asked them. "**You call me *teacher and Lord*, and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, *your Lord and teacher*, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example, that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master; nor is the messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.**"

I am not referring to all of you. I know those I have chosen. **But the scripture must be fulfilled: he who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.**

I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you **before I suffer.** For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "**Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom.**"

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "**Take and eat; this is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.**"

Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "**Drink from it all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**"

After Jesus had said this, he was deeply troubled in his spirit and cried out, **"I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me--one who is eating with me."**

His disciples stared at each other at a loss to know which of them he meant. They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, *Lord?*" One of his disciples, the one whom he loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him who he means." So this disciple leaned over and asked Jesus, "Who is it?"

Jesus said, **"It is one of the twelve--the one to whom I will give this bread after I have dipped it in the dish. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son Of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."** Then dipping the piece of bread into the dish, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. Then Judas said, "Surely not I, *Rabbi?*" Jesus answered, **"Yes, it is you."** As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. **"What you are about to do, do quickly,"** Jesus told him, but no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the Feast, or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

When Judas was gone, Jesus said, **"Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another."**

A dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, **"The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."**

Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: " 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, **"Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."** Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I am ready to go with you to prison. Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will. I will lay down my life for you."

Then Jesus answered, **"Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."** But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the others said the same.

Then Jesus asked them, **"When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?"** "Nothing," they answered. He said to them, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. **It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.**" The disciples said, "See, Lord, here are two swords." "That is enough," he replied.

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

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

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

Jesus answered: **"Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."**

"If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever--the Spirit of truth. The world

cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But *you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.*"

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

Jesus replied, *"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching.* These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. **All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.**

You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

Come now; let us leave."

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus continued, "I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he trims clean so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. **Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.**

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you to go and bear fruit--fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. *He who hates me hates my Father as well.* If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. **But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.'**

When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me; but you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning. All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.

Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that

belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.

In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."

Some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,' and 'Because I am going to the Father'?" They kept asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'? We don't understand what he is saying."

Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, **"Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, 'In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me'? I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.**

Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."

"You believe at last!" Jesus answered. "But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: **"Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me**

to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, *protect them by the power of your name--the name you gave me--so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.*

I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you *protect them from the evil one.* They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that *the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.*"

When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was an olive grove, and he and his disciples went into it. They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee (James and John) along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. On reaching the place, he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me, and pray that you will not fall into temptation."

Withdrawing about a stone's throw beyond them, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and *his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.*

When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done." When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

Now Judas, who betrayed him knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the grove, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials sent from the chief priests and Pharisees and the elders. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

Returning to his disciples the third time, Jesus said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! **The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!**"

While he was still speaking, Judas arrived with a large crowd armed with swords and clubs. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." He approached Jesus to kiss him, but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? Friend, do what you came for."

Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "**Who is it you want?**"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. *When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.*

Again he asked them, "**Who is it you want?**" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

"I told you that I am he," Jesus answered. **"If you are looking for me, then let these men go."** This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: **"I have not lost one of those you gave me."**

When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

But Jesus commanded Peter, **"No more of this! Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me? Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"** Then Jesus touched the man's ear and healed him.

At that time Jesus said to the crowd, **"Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled. This is your hour--when darkness reigns."**

Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, he fled naked, leaving the garment behind. Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials seized Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people. All the chief priests, elders and teachers of the law came together.

Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus at a distance. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priests's courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

It was cold, and the servants and officials sat around a fire they had kindled in the middle of the courtyard to keep warm. Peter wanted to see the outcome, so he also sat there with them, warming himself. A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "You were with Jesus of Galilee." But he denied it before them all. "Woman, I don't know him," he said. "I don't know or understand what you are talking about."

Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. **"I have spoken openly to the world,"** Jesus replied. **"I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said."**

When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. "Is that any way to answer the high priest?" he demanded. "If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?" Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas the high priest.

At daybreak, the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. *The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. Finally two came forward and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy this temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'" Yet even their testimony did not agree.*

Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. The high priest said to him, "**I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.**"

Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. **Yes, you are right in saying I am. But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the mighty God and coming on the clouds of heaven.**"

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as worthy of death. Then some began to spit in his face. They blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and demanded, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?" And they said many other insulting things to him. Then the guards took him and beat him.

Then Peter went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

About an hour later one of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the olive grove?" And another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean. Your accent gives you away." Then he began to call down curses on himself and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about!"

Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: **"Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times."** And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, came to the decision to put Jesus to death. They bound him, led him from Caiaphas to the palace of Pilate, the Roman governor. To avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

"If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you."

Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." But we have no right to execute anyone," the Jews objected. **This happened so that the words Jesus had spoken indicating the kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled.**

When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood."

"What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility." So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty silver coins, the price set on him by the people of Israel, and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

Meanwhile Jesus stood before Pilot, and the whole assembly began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king."

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" **"Is that your own idea,"** Jesus asked, **"or did others talk to you about me?"**

"Do you think I am a Jew?" Pilate replied. "It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."

"You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, **"You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."** "What is truth?" Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and announced to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge against this man."

But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here."

On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. That day Herod and Pilate became friends--before this they had been enemies.

Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought me this man as one who was inciting the people to rebellion. I have examined him in your presence and have found no basis for your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, I will punish him and then release him."

When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear how many things they are accusing you of?" But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge--to the great amazement of the governor.

Now it was the governor's custom at the Feast to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas, who was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ, the king of the Jews?" For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him.

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor. "Barabbas," they answered. **"What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?"** Pilate asked. With one voice they cried out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!"

Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to them again. But they kept shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" For the third time he spoke to them: "Why? What crime has this man committed? I have found in him no grounds for the death penalty. Therefore I will

have him punished and then release him." But they shouted all the louder and insistently demanded that he be crucified.

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" All the people answered, **"Let his blood be on us and on our children!"**

So Pilate decided to grant their demand. He released Barabbas who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, the one they asked for, but he had Jesus flogged and surrendered Jesus to their will, handing him over to be crucified.

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a purple robe on him, and then wove a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, King of the Jews!" they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again.

Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him." When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!" But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because **he claimed to be the Son of God.**"

When Pilate heard this, *he was even more afraid*, and he went back inside the palace. **"Where do you come from?"** he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. "Do you refuse to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?"

Jesus answered, **"You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin."**

From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jews kept shouting, "If let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as The Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). It was the day of Preparation of Passover Week, about the sixth hour.

"Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he started out for The Place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). As they led him away, they seized a certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, who was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross behind Jesus. A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them, **"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' Then 'they will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' ' For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"**

Two other men, both robbers, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to Golgotha, they offered him wine to drink, mixed with myrrh; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. There they crucified him, along with the criminals--one on his right, the other on his left. ***Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."***

It was the third hour when they crucified him. Pilate had a notice of *the charge against him* prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews." Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. "Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." **This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did.**

Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, **"So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, come down from the cross and save yourself!"** The people stood watching, and **the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One. Let this Christ, this King of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe."** The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, **"If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."**

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: **"Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"** But the other criminal rebuked him. *"Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said,*

*"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, **"I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."***

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, **"Dear woman, here is your son,"** and to the disciple, **"Here is your mother."** From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

It was now about the sixth hour, and **darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining.** And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, **"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"** When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah." One man ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Leave him alone now. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, **"I am thirsty."** A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, **"It is finished."** And he called out in a loud voice, **"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."** With that, he bowed his head and breathed his last.

At that moment, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus heard his cry and saw how he died, and saw the earthquake and all that had happened, **they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely this was a righteous man. Surely he was the Son of God!"** When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. But all those who knew him stood at a distance, watching these things. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and Joseph, and Salome and the mother of Zebedee's sons. In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. **But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given**

testimony, and this testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced."

Now there was a man named Joseph, a prominent member of the Council, a good and upright man, who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea and he was waiting for the kingdom of God. He was also a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jews. As evening approached, he went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloe, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden Joseph's own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. Then they rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed them and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment.

The next day, the one after the Preparation Day, **the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."** "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how." **So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.**

When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

After the Sabbath, early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary of Magdala went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed, but Peter went away, wondering to himself what had happened. **(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)** Then the disciples went back to their homes, but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. "Woman," he said, "Why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary of Magdala went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Meanwhile, just after sunrise, Mary the mother of James, Joanna, and Salome took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" But when the women looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away from the tomb. As they entered the tomb, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus, but they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. **"Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. See the place where they laid him. Then go quickly and tell his disciples and Peter, 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"** While they were wondering about this, suddenly, two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, **"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'"** Then they remembered his words. Trembling and bewildered, yet filled with joy, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid. Suddenly Jesus met them. **"Greetings,"** he said. they came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. **Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."** When they came

back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. But the apostles did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one living in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened there in these days?" "What things?" he asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."

He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has

appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. But they did not believe these men either.

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. **He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."** When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, **"Do you have anything here to eat?"** They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence. Again Jesus said, **"Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."** And with that he breathed on them and said, **"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."** **Then he said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."** Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. **He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised: but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high. Then go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; and they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."**

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. When the other disciples told him that they had seen the Lord, he declared, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" **Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."** **Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"** **Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."** Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. **But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but they did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "**Friends, haven't you any fish?**" "No," they answered. He said, "**Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.**" When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "**Bring some of the fish you have just caught.**" Simon Peter climbed aboard and *dragged the net ashore*. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "**Come and have breakfast.**" None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. ***This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.*** When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "**Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?**" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "**Feed my lambs.**" Again Jesus said, "**Simon son of John, do you truly love me?**" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "**Take care of my sheep.**" The third time he said to him, "**Simon son of John, do you love me?**" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "**Feed my sheep. I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.**" Jesus said this to indicate the kind of *death by which Peter would glorify God*. Then he said to him, "**Follow me!**" Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is going to betray you?") When Peter saw him, he asked, "*Lord, what about him?*" **Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me."** Because of this, the rumor spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, "**If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?**" This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "**Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you**

have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, **"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age."**

When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. **While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven before their very eyes and he sat at the right hand of God, and a cloud hid him from their sight.** They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. “Men of Galilee,” they said, “Why do you stand here looking into the sky? **This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.**” Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.