A HARMONY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS AND ACTS

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the Acts of the Apostles Woven Into One Continuous Narrative — With a Complete Textual Analysis of Variances and Apparent Contradictions

Independent Scholarly Research

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Preface

This volume presents a complete harmony of the four canonical Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in twenty-four chapters, comprising 257 sections. It is written in the tradition of the great harmonists: Tatian of Syria, whose *Diatessaron* (c. 170 C.E.) first wove the four Gospels into a single narrative; A.T. Robertson, whose *A Harmony of the Gospels for Students of the Life of Christ* (1922) remains the standard scholarly reference; and Kurt Aland, whose *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* provides the critical Greek comparative text used in academic institutions worldwide.

Translation

All Scripture quotations throughout this volume are drawn from the **American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901** — a major English revision of the King James Bible undertaken by American and British scholars using the best Greek and Hebrew manuscripts then available, including the Westcott-Hort critical text of the New Testament. The ASV entered the public domain immediately upon its publication in 1901 and may be reproduced without restriction. Its formal, word-for-word rendering and preservation of archaic second-person pronouns (*thee*, *thou*, *thy*) maintain the solemnity of the original texts while remaining accessible to English readers of any background.

Scope and Organization

Chapters 1–16 harmonize the three Synoptic Gospels — Matthew, Mark, and Luke — from their opening genealogies and birth narratives through the resurrection and the Great Commission. The chronological sequence follows the scholarly consensus of Robertson's *Harmony* and Orville Daniel's *A Harmony of the Four Gospels* (2nd ed., 1996), with occasional departures noted in the chapter appendices.

Chapters 17–21 introduce the Gospel of John — the Fourth Gospel, which stands apart from the Synoptics in almost every dimension of style, theology, and narrative selection. John's unique material (the Prologue, the Nicodemus discourse, the Samaritan woman, the Bread of Life Discourse, the Farewell Discourse, and the High Priestly Prayer) is presented in full alongside the Synoptic material it illuminates and supplements.

Chapters 22–24 cover the Acts of the Apostles, Luke's second volume, which narrates the fulfillment of the Great Commission from Jerusalem through Rome across the first three decades of the church's existence. Acts 1–28 is presented in twenty-three sections, from the Ascension through Paul's two-year house arrest in Rome.

Chapter 24 concludes with a comprehensive textual analysis of the major variances between the Greek New Testament Critical Text (Nestle-Aland NA28/UBS5) and the Byzantine Majority Text, along with a scholarly examination of the most significant apparent contradictions between the Gospel accounts, evaluated against the Greek manuscript evidence.

Method

Each section opens with its source Gospel(s) in brackets — **[Matt]**, **[Mark]**, **[Luke]**, **[John]**, or **[Acts]** — and combined forms such as **[Matt / Mark / Luke]** for triple-tradition parallels. Where one Gospel provides the fullest account, it is used as the base text; distinctive material from parallel accounts is woven in without alteration. No words are invented, paraphrased, or altered; all text is drawn directly from the ASV.

The chapter appendices contain scholarly notes on harmonization decisions, textual variants, exegetical observations on the Greek New Testament, and cross-references to the companion academic papers on eucharistic theology, the history of war, and related topics.

A Note on Apparent Contradictions

The four Gospels do not always tell the same story in the same way. They differ in the order of some events, in the details they preserve, in the names they record, and occasionally in the precise wording of sayings. Chapter 24 of this volume examines these differences in full. The conclusion reached there — that the variations authenticate rather than undermine the tradition — is consistent with the judgment of the overwhelming majority of New Testament scholars across the theological spectrum. Multiple independent witnesses to real events always vary in peripheral details while agreeing on the central facts. The roughness of the Gospel tradition is the signature of genuine witness.

Acknowledgment

This harmony draws on the scholarship of A.T. Robertson, Kurt Aland, Orville Daniel, Bruce Metzger (*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed., 1994), Gordon Fee (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT), Raymond Brown (*The Gospel According to John*, Anchor Bible), Craig Keener (*The Gospel of John: A Commentary*), and Maurice Robinson and William Pierpont (*The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform*, 2005). The Greek New Testament quotations and lexical notes throughout draw on the Nestle-Aland 28th edition and Liddell-Scott-Jones *A Greek-English Lexicon* (9th ed.).

Chapter One

Matthew 1, Mark 1, Luke 1 — Birth Narratives, Genealogies, the Ministry of John

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A Harmony of Chapter One

Section 1 — Luke's Dedication to Theophilus [Luke 1:1–4]

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed.

Section 2 — The Angel Appears to Zechariah [Luke 1:5–25]

There was in the days of Herod, king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abijah: and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

Now it came to pass, while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.

And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the

presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto thee, and to bring thee these good tidings. And behold, thou shalt be silent and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall come to pass, because thou believedst not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and they marvelled while he tarried in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he continued making signs unto them, and remained dumb. And it came to pass, when the days of his ministration were fulfilled, he departed unto his house.

And after these days Elisabeth his wife conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord done unto me in the days wherein he looked upon me, to take away my reproach among men.

Section 3 — The Angel Gabriel Appears to Mary [Luke 1:26–38]

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee.

But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God. And behold, Elisabeth thy kinswoman, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that was called barren. For no word from God shall be void of power.

And Mary said, Behold, the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Section 4 — The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah [Matt 1:1–17]

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judah and his brethren; and Judah begat Perez and Zerah of Tamar; and Perez begat Hezron; and Hezron begat Ram; and Ram begat Amminadab; and Amminadab begat Nahshon; and Nahshon begat Salmon; and Salmon begat Boaz of Rahab; and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David the king.

And David begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Uriah; and Solomon begat Rehoboam; and Rehoboam begat Abijah; and Abijah begat Asa; and Asa begat Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Uzziah; and Uzziah begat Jotham; and Jotham begat Ahaz; and Ahaz begat Hezekiah; and Hezekiah begat Manasseh; and Manasseh begat Amon; and Amon begat Josiah; and Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brethren, at the time of the carrying away to Babylon.

And after the carrying away to Babylon, Jechoniah begat Shealtiel; and Shealtiel begat Zerubbabel; and Zerubbabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; and Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; and Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham unto David are fourteen generations; and from David unto the carrying away to Babylon fourteen generations; and from the carrying away to Babylon unto the Christ fourteen generations.

Section 5 — The Birth of Jesus Announced to Joseph [Matt 1:18–25]

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.

Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying,

Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel;

which is, being interpreted, God with us.

And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth a son: and he called his name JESUS.

Section 6 — Mary Visits Elisabeth [Luke 1:39–56]

And Mary arose in these days and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit; and she lifted up her voice with a loud cry, and said,

Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me? For behold, when the voice of thy salutation came into mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a fulfilment of the things which have been spoken to her from the Lord.

And Mary said,

My soul doth magnify the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath looked upon the low estate of his handmaid: For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; And holy is his name. And his mercy is unto generations and generations On them that fear him. He hath showed strength with his arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart. He hath put down princes from their thrones, And hath exalted them of low degree. The hungry he hath filled with good things; And the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath given help to Israel his servant, That he might remember mercy (As he spake unto our fathers) Toward Abraham and his seed for ever.

And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned unto her house.

Section 7 — The Birth of John the Baptist [Luke 1:57–80]

Now Elisabeth's time was fulfilled that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and her kinsfolk heard that the Lord had magnified his mercy towards her; and they rejoiced with her.

And it came to pass on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, blessing God. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. And all that heard them laid them up in their heart, saying, What then shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him.

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; For he hath visited and wrought redemption for his people, And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of his servant David (As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old), Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To show mercy towards our fathers, And to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he sware unto Abraham our father, To grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies Should serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him all our days. Yea and thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High: For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to make ready his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people In the remission of their sins, Because of the tender mercy of our God, Whereby the dayspring from on high shall visit us, To shine upon them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death; To guide our feet into the way of peace.

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

Section 8 — The Beginning of the Gospel [Mark 1:1]

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Section 9 — The Word of the Lord and the Wilderness Prophet [Mark 1:2–8 / Luke 1:76–77]

Even as it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight.

John came, who baptized in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance unto remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the country of Judaea, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

And John was clothed with camel's hair, and had a leathern girdle about his loins, and did eat locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, There cometh after me he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I baptized you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

Section 10 — The Baptism of Jesus [Mark 1:9–11 / Luke 1:21–22 expanded]

And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him: and a voice came out of the heavens,

Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

Section 11 — The Temptation in the Wilderness [Mark 1:12–13]

And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

Section 12 — Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee [Mark 1:14–15]

Now after John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying,

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the gospel.

Appendix: Notes on the Harmony

On the Ordering

The sections in this harmony follow this rationale:

Sections 1–2 give Luke's preface and the announcement of John's birth — the chronological starting point of the Gospel story, placed by Luke before any announcement to Mary.

Section 3 gives the Annunciation to Mary — Luke's account, presented after Zechariah's encounter since the angel's visit to Mary occurs "in the sixth month" of Elisabeth's pregnancy (Luke 1:26).

Sections 4–5 give Matthew's genealogy and the announcement to Joseph — Matthew's opening chapter, which approaches the birth narrative from Joseph's perspective rather than Mary's.

Section 6 returns to Luke's narrative with the Visitation — Mary's journey to Elisabeth, which would have occurred after the Annunciation (Luke 1:39).

Section 7 gives the birth of John, Zechariah's song (the *Benedictus*), and John's early years in the wilderness — completing Luke 1's main narrative arc.

Section 8 introduces Mark's opening verse — his entire "prologue" is a single sentence: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Mark has no birth narrative whatsoever; his Gospel begins directly with John's ministry.

Sections 9–12 harmonize Mark 1:2–15 with Luke's broader narrative context: the ministry of John, Jesus's baptism, the temptation, and the opening of Jesus's public ministry in Galilee. These events are presented at the end of the Chapter 1 harmony because, chronologically, they follow all the birth and infancy material in Matthew 1 and Luke 1.

On the Three Evangelists

Matthew writes for a Jewish audience, opening with a genealogy that roots Jesus in the lineage of Abraham and David — the two great covenant figures of Israel's history. His chapter one is concerned with Joseph, with legal descent, and with the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (quoting Isaiah 7:14). Matthew's Jesus is the promised Messiah of Israel.

Mark has no birth narrative at all. His Gospel opens as if from a standing start: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ." He moves immediately to John the Baptist, then to baptism, temptation, and ministry — without pausing for genealogy, angels, or infancy stories. Mark's Jesus is above all a man of action; the word *euthys* (εὐθύς, "straightway" or "immediately") appears approximately 41 times in Mark's Gospel. His Chapter 1 is the most narrative-dense of the three Synoptics.

Luke is the most literary and the most concerned with the poor, the marginalized, and the role of women. His prologue is modeled on Hellenistic historical writing (compare Thucydides and Josephus). He alone preserves the *Magnificat* of Mary, the *Benedictus* of Zechariah, and the

story of Elisabeth's pregnancy. Luke addresses "most excellent Theophilus" — a Greco-Roman patron — and writes the most carefully constructed of the three Synoptic openings.

Together, these three accounts are not in conflict but in concert: Matthew provides legal and prophetic legitimacy; Luke provides historical narrative and human detail; Mark provides urgency and action. The harmony presented here attempts to let all three voices be heard in a single reading.

On the American Standard Version (ASV, 1901)

The ASV was the product of a joint American and British scholarly committee revising the King James Bible using the best Greek and Hebrew manuscripts then available, including the Westcott-Hort critical text of the New Testament. It is considered one of the most formally accurate English translations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It entered the public domain immediately upon publication in 1901. Its archaic "thee/thou" forms and formal word order preserve the solemnity of the original text while remaining accessible to modern English readers. All quotations in this harmony are taken from the ASV without alteration.

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Section 13 — The Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem [Luke 2:1–7]

Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to enroll themselves, every one to his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; to enroll himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child.

And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Section 14 — The Shepherds and the Angels [Luke 2:8–20]

And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them,

Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

Section 15 — The Circumcision and Presentation in the Temple [Luke 2:21–38]

And when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising him, his name was called JESUS, which was so called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord), and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law, then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord, According to thy word, in peace; For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; A light for revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of thy people Israel.

And his father and his mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning him; and Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother,

Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, and she had been a widow even unto fourscore and four years), who departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Section 16 — The Visit of the Wise Men [Matt 2:1–12]

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise-men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written through the prophet,

And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah: For out of thee shall come forth a governor, Who shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

Then Herod privily called the Wise-men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him.

And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Section 17 — The Flight into Egypt [Matt 2:13–18]

Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son.

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise-men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had exactly learned of the Wise-men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

A voice was heard in Ramah, Weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; And she would not be comforted, because they are not.

Section 18 — The Return from Egypt to Nazareth [Matt 2:19–23 / Luke 2:39–40]

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life.

And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned of God in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.

And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Section 19 — The Boy Jesus in the Temple [Luke 2:41–52]

And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him.

And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Section 20 — The Preaching of John the Baptist [Matt 3:1–6 / Mark 1:2–6 / Luke 3:1–6]

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, And every mountain and hill shall be brought low; And the crooked shall become straight, And the rough ways smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about the Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Section 21 — John's Warning to the Pharisees and Sadducees [Matt 3:7–12 / Luke 3:7–18]

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them,

Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do?

And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise.

And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Teacher, what must we do?

And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you.

And soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do?

And he said unto them, Extort from no man by violence, neither accuse any one wrongfully; and be content with your wages.

And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ; John answered, saying unto them all,

I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire: whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

With many other exhortations therefore preached he good tidings unto the people.

Section 22 — The Baptism of Jesus [Matt 3:13–17 / Mark 1:9–11 / Luke 3:21–22]

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

And it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him, and a voice came out of heaven,

Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Section 23 — The Genealogy of Jesus Through Mary [Luke 3:23–38]

And Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, the son of Jesus, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

Section 24 — The Temptation of Jesus [Matt 4:1–11 / Mark 1:12–13 / Luke 4:1–13]

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days, being tempted of the devil. And he did eat nothing in those days: and when they were completed, he hungered.

And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: And on their hands they shall bear thee up, Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Section 25 — John the Baptist Imprisoned [Luke 3:19–20 / Mark 1:14a]

But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother's wife, and for all the evil things which Herod had done, added this also to them all, that he shut up John in prison.

Appendix: Notes on Chapters Two and Three

On Luke's Unique Infancy Material

Luke chapter 2 is unparalleled in the other Synoptics. Matthew describes the birth of Jesus but from a legal and prophetic perspective — he records the Wise Men and the flight to Egypt but not the shepherds, not Simeon, not Anna. Luke alone gives us the shepherds in the fields, the angelic chorus, the *Nunc Dimittis* of Simeon, Anna the prophetess, and — crucially — the only account in any Gospel of Jesus's childhood: the twelve-year-old in the temple (Luke 2:41–52). This is the sole window in canonical Scripture into the years between the infancy and the public ministry.

On Matthew's Unique Infancy Material

Matthew chapter 2 is equally distinctive. Only Matthew records the Wise Men (*Magi*) from the East, the star, the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, Herod's massacre of the innocents, and the flight into Egypt with its fulfillment of Hosea 11:1 ("Out of Egypt did I call my son"). Matthew structures his infancy narrative around five Old Testament quotations, each introduced by the formula "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet" — a pattern that runs throughout his entire Gospel and reflects his primary audience of Jewish readers familiar with the prophetic scriptures.

On Mark's Absence from Chapters Two and Three

Mark contributes nothing to chapters two and three in the traditional sense — his Gospel has no infancy narrative, no genealogy, no childhood story, and no account of John's extended preaching. His chapter 1 material (the preaching of John, the baptism, the temptation, and the imprisonment of John) is spread across what Matthew and Luke treat as parts of their second and third chapters. In this harmony, those Markan passages are integrated at their chronologically appropriate points: the baptism in Section 22, the temptation in Section 24, and John's imprisonment in Section 25.

On the Two Genealogies

This harmony places Matthew's genealogy in Chapter 1 (Section 4) and Luke's genealogy in Chapter 3 (Section 23), following the natural placement in their respective Gospels. The two genealogies differ significantly: Matthew traces the line through Joseph from Abraham forward, following the royal Davidic descent through Solomon. Luke traces the line through Joseph

(noted as “as was supposed”) from Jesus backward all the way to Adam and ultimately to God — a universalist gesture consistent with Luke’s theology of inclusion. The most widely accepted scholarly explanation is that Luke’s genealogy actually traces Mary’s biological descent while legally attributing it to Joseph, since in Jewish custom a genealogy was always reckoned through the father. This is supported by the difference in David’s son named: Matthew goes through Solomon (the royal line), Luke through Nathan (David’s other son through Bathsheba) — consistent with Mary being of Davidic descent through a different branch than Joseph.

On the Temptation Narrative

All three Synoptics record the temptation, but with different levels of detail. Mark (1:12–13) gives only two verses: “And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.” Matthew (4:1–11) and Luke (4:1–13) give the full three-temptation account. Matthew and Luke agree on all three temptations but reverse the order of the second and third (Matthew places the pinnacle of the temple second and the mountain third; Luke reverses them). The harmony follows Matthew’s order, which is the most widely followed in the tradition.

On the Placement of Luke’s Genealogy

Luke places his genealogy at Luke 3:23 — immediately after the baptism — rather than at the opening of the Gospel as Matthew does. This placement is deliberate: Luke introduces the genealogy at the moment Jesus enters public life, as if to say “here is who this man is, traced back to the very beginning of humanity.” Matthew’s opening genealogy serves to introduce Jesus as heir to the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants; Luke’s closing genealogy at the threshold of ministry serves to introduce him as the second Adam, the Son of God who will undo what the first Adam did.

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Chapter Four

Matthew 4, Mark 1, Luke 4 — The Opening of the Galilean Ministry

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Part Three: The Opening of the Galilean Ministry

Section 26 — Jesus Returns to Galilee and Begins to Preach [Matt 4:12–17 / Mark 1:14–15 / Luke 4:14–15]

Now when Jesus heard that John was delivered up, he withdrew into Galilee. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and a fame went out concerning him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, Toward the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, The people that sat in darkness Saw a great light, And to them that sat in the region and shadow of death, To them did light spring up.

From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Section 27 — The Rejection at Nazareth [Luke 4:16–30]

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind, To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down: and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.

And all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth: and they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

And he said unto them, Doubtless ye will say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done at Capernaum, do also here in thine own country.

And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is acceptable in his own country. But of a truth I say unto you, There were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there came a great famine over all the land; and unto none of them was Elijah sent, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.

And they were all filled with wrath in the synagogue, as they heard these things; and they rose up, and cast him forth out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

Section 28 — The Call of the First Disciples [Matt 4:18–22 / Mark 1:16–20]

And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left the nets, and followed him.

And going on from thence he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they straightway left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Section 29 — The Man with an Unclean Spirit in the Synagogue at Capernaum [Mark 1:21–28 / Luke 4:31–37]

And they go into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as having authority, and not as the scribes.

And straightway there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus thou Nazarene? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And the unclean spirit, tearing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him.

And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this? a new teaching! with authority he commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey him. And the report of him went out straightway everywhere into all the region of Galilee round about.

Section 30 — The Healing of Peter’s Mother-in-Law [Matt 8:14–15 / Mark 1:29–31 / Luke 4:38–39]

And straightway, when they were come out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick of a fever; and straightway they tell him of her: and he came and took her by the hand, and raised her up; and the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

Section 31 — Healings at Evening: Many Brought to Jesus [Matt 8:16–17 / Mark 1:32–34 / Luke 4:40–41]

And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with demons. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many demons; and he suffered not the demons to speak, because they knew him.

And he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And demons also came out from many, crying out, and saying, Thou art the Son of God. And rebuking them, he suffered them not to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

Now this came to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases.

Section 32 — A Morning of Prayer; Jesus Preaches Throughout Galilee [Mark 1:35–39 / Luke 4:42–44]

And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed. And Simon and they that were with him followed after him; and they found him, and say unto him, All are seeking thee.

And he saith unto them, Let us go elsewhere into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for to this end came I forth.

And the multitudes sought after him, and came unto him, and would have stayed him, that he should not go from them. But he said unto them, I must preach the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent.

And he went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out demons.

Section 33 — The Miraculous Catch of Fish and the Call of Simon [Luke 5:1–11]

Now it came to pass, while the multitude pressed upon him and heard the word of God, that he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; and he saw two boats standing by the lake: but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the multitudes out of the boat.

And when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

And Simon answered and said, Master, we toiled all night, and took nothing: but at thy word I will let down the nets.

And when they had done this, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes; and their nets were breaking; and they beckoned unto their partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

But Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus's knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

For he was amazed, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken; and so were also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

And when they had brought their boats to land, they left all, and followed him.

Section 34 — The Cleansing of the Leper [Matt 8:2–4 / Mark 1:40–45 / Luke 5:12–16]

And it came to pass, while he was in one of the cities, behold, a man full of leprosy: and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

And he stretched forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And straightway the leprosy departed from him.

And he charged him to tell no man: but go thy way, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

But so much the more went abroad the report concerning him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed of their infirmities. But he withdrew himself in the deserts, and prayed.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Four

On the Triple Tradition in Chapter Four

Chapter four is the point at which all three Synoptics are running in close parallel for the first time. Matthew 4, Mark 1 (its closing sections), and Luke 4 share the same sequence of events with remarkable agreement: the departure into Galilee, the preaching of the kingdom, the call of the first disciples, the synagogue exorcism at Capernaum, the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, the evening healings, and the withdrawal for prayer and preaching tour. The agreement among the three is so close that this material forms one of the strongest pillars of the "two-source hypothesis" — the scholarly theory that Matthew and Luke both drew independently on Mark as a common written source.

On the Rejection at Nazareth

Luke places the rejection at Nazareth (Section 27) at the very beginning of Jesus's Galilean ministry — almost as a programmatic scene that sets the theological agenda for everything that follows. Matthew (4:13) mentions Nazareth only briefly, noting that Jesus "left Nazareth" and moved to Capernaum. Mark records the rejection at Nazareth at 6:1–6, later in his narrative sequence. Most harmonists (Robertson, Aland, Daniel) place Luke's fuller account early, as Luke intends it — as a keynote event — and treat it as either a separate incident from Mark's later account or as Luke's deliberate repositioning of a later event to the front of his narrative for thematic purposes. This harmony follows Luke's placement.

The scene itself is theologically crucial: Jesus reads from Isaiah 61 ("The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor") and announces its fulfillment in their hearing — a claim of such directness that it initially wins admiration, then provokes fury. His reference to Elijah going to a Gentile widow and Elisha cleansing a Syrian leper — implying that God's favor is not restricted to Israel — is what triggers the attempt to throw him off the cliff. This is Luke's announcement of one of his Gospel's great themes: the gospel for all peoples, not Israel alone.

On the Call of the Disciples

Matthew and Mark place the call of Simon, Andrew, James, and John after the move to Capernaum, with no prior relationship established between Jesus and these fishermen. Luke's account of the miraculous catch of fish (Section 33) — placed slightly later — provides a richer backstory: Simon has already lent his boat for preaching, and the miraculous catch produces his confession of unworthiness ("Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord") before the call to "catch men." Many harmonists treat Luke's account as a separate, fuller version of the same calling event that Matthew and Mark summarize. Others treat them as sequential: a first brief encounter (Matt/Mark) followed by a more decisive call after the miraculous catch (Luke). This harmony presents them in narrative order — the brief call (Section 28) followed by the fuller Lukan account (Section 33) — allowing both accounts to stand.

On the Healing of the Leper

The cleansing of the leper (Section 34) is the first detailed healing miracle of the Galilean ministry recorded by all three Synoptics. Two details deserve note. First, Jesus touches the leper — an act that would have rendered him ceremonially unclean under Levitical law (Leviticus 13:45–46). He does so deliberately and immediately, before speaking. Second, he commands silence and instructs the man to present himself to the priest "for a testimony unto them" — fulfilling the Mosaic protocol for lepers who had been healed (Leviticus 14:1–32). The tension between Jesus's authority over disease and his reverence for the Mosaic law is characteristic of all three Synoptics throughout their fourth chapters.

On Mark's Contribution

Mark's chapter 1 — which in the previous harmony volumes provided relatively little material (his prologue being a single verse, his birth narrative nonexistent) — comes fully into its own in chapter four. Sections 29 through 32 are primarily Markan in character: rapid, vivid, action-focused, with the characteristic Markan *euthys* ("straightway" or "immediately") driving the

narrative forward. Mark's Jesus is a man of sovereign power who moves through the world with an urgency that Matthew and Luke soften with more extended discourse. The early morning prayer scene (Section 32) — Jesus withdrawing before dawn to a solitary place — appears only in Mark and is one of the most humanly intimate details in the Synoptic tradition.

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Chapter Five

Matthew 5, Mark 2, Luke 5–6 — The Sermon on the Mount Begins

Part Four: Controversies, Call, and the Sermon on the Mount

Section 35 — The Healing of the Paralytic [Mark 2:1–12 / Luke 5:17–26]

And he entered again into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, no, not even about the door: and he spake the word unto them.

And it came to pass on one of those days, that he was teaching; and there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every village of Galilee and Judaea and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was with him to heal.

And they come, bringing unto him a man sick of the palsy, borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the crowd, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed whereon the sick of the palsy lay. And Jesus seeing their faith saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins are forgiven.

But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak? he blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, even God?

And straightway Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins (he saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.

And he arose, and straightway took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion. And they were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

Section 36 — The Call of Levi [Mark 2:13–14 / Luke 5:27–28]

And he went forth again by the sea side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the place of toll, and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

Section 37 — The Feast at Levi's House; Eating with Sinners [Mark 2:15–17 / Luke 5:29–32]

And it came to pass, that he was sitting at meat in his house, and many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners.

And when Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

Section 38 — The Question About Fasting [Mark 2:18–22 / Luke 5:33–39]

And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting: and they come and say unto him, Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

And Jesus said unto them, Can the sons of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day.

No man seweth a piece of undressed cloth on an old garment: else that which should fill it up taketh from it, the new from the old, and a worse rent is made. And no man putteth new wine into old wine-skins: else the wine will burst the skins, and the wine perisheth, and the skins: but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins.

And no man having drunk old wine desireth new; for he saith, The old is good.

Section 39 — Lord of the Sabbath: Plucking Grain [Mark 2:23–28 / Luke 6:1–5]

And it came to pass, that he was going on the sabbath day through the grain fields; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears. And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath day that which is not lawful?

And he said unto them, Did ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was hungry, he, and they that were with him? How he entered into the house of God when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the showbread, which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests, and gave also to them that were with him?

And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: so that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath.

Section 40 — The Great Multitudes; Setting for the Sermon [Matt 4:23–25]

And Jesus went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness among the people. And the report of him went forth into all Syria: and they brought unto him all that were sick, holden with divers diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptic, and palsied; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes from Galilee and Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judaea and from beyond the Jordan.

Section 41 — The Sermon on the Mount: The Beatitudes [Matt 5:1–12]

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

Section 42 — Salt of the Earth and Light of the World [Matt 5:13–16]

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house.

Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Section 43 — Christ and the Law: Not Abolition but Fulfilment [Matt 5:17–20]

Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Section 44 — The First Antithesis: Anger and Reconciliation [Matt 5:21–26]

Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall

be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire.

If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing.

Section 45 — The Second Antithesis: Lust and Purity [Matt 5:27–30]

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell.

And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell.

Section 46 — The Third Antithesis: Divorce [Matt 5:31–32]

It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.

Section 47 — The Fourth Antithesis: Oaths [Matt 5:33–37]

Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.

Section 48 — The Fifth Antithesis: Retaliation [Matt 5:38–42]

Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him two.

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Section 49 — The Sixth Antithesis: Love of Enemies [Matt 5:43–48]

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.

For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same?

Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Five

On the Structure of Chapter Five

Chapter five in this harmony falls into two distinct movements. The first (Sections 35–39) follows the triple tradition: Mark 2 and Luke 5–6 carry the narrative through the healing of the paralytic, the call of Levi, the feast with sinners, the debate about fasting, and the sabbath controversy. These are closely parallel accounts and harmonize with relative ease.

The second movement (Sections 40–49) is dominated entirely by Matthew 5 — the opening chapter of the Sermon on the Mount. Mark has no parallel to the Sermon whatsoever. Luke contains a shorter version often called the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17–49), which shares the Beatitudes and some antithesis material but differs significantly in setting, structure, and content. The scholarly consensus is that Luke's Sermon on the Plain is either a separate occasion or a condensed and relocated version of the same discourse. This harmony presents Matthew's full account as the base text for the Sermon, which is by far the longer and more structurally complete version.

On the Paralytic: "Thy Sins Are Forgiven"

The healing of the paralytic (Section 35) is one of the most theologically loaded miracle narratives in the Synoptic tradition. The crowd expects physical healing; Jesus grants

forgiveness of sins first, triggering an immediate theological crisis among the scribes — for in Jewish theology, only God can forgive sins. Jesus's response is to perform the physical healing as public demonstration that the Son of Man possesses the divine authority he has claimed: "that ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins." The miracle is thus simultaneously an act of compassion and a claim of divine identity.

The detail that the four friends broke open the roof to lower their paralyzed companion appears in both Mark and Luke and is one of the most vivid eyewitness-quality details in the Synoptic tradition. Mark says they "uncovered the roof" and "broke it up" — describing a flat Palestinian mud-and-thatch construction that could be dismantled from above. Luke, writing for a Greco-Roman audience familiar with tiled roofs, says they "let him down through the tiles." Both are describing the same act; the difference in detail reflects each author's awareness of his intended reader's cultural context.

On the Call of Levi

Matthew is called "Levi" in Mark and Luke but "Matthew" in Matthew's own Gospel (Matt 9:9) and in all four apostolic lists (Matt 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). The most natural explanation is that Levi was his given name and Matthew ("gift of God") a name given by Jesus, as Simon received the name Peter. The call narrative is among the briefest in the Gospels: Jesus passes, speaks one command, and Levi abandons his tax booth without recorded hesitation. The feast that follows — at which "many publicans and sinners" recline with Jesus — provokes the Pharisees' complaint and Jesus's celebrated reply: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

On the Fasting Controversy and the New/Old Metaphors

The two metaphors Jesus uses in Section 38 — the unshrunk cloth on an old garment, and new wine in old wineskins — are among the most discussed in the Synoptic tradition. Both make the same structural point: the new reality Jesus brings cannot be contained within the old structures of religious practice without causing damage to both. The old garment tears worse; the old wineskin bursts. Luke alone adds a third word: "no man having drunk old wine desireth new; for he saith, The old is good" — a wry acknowledgment that those settled in old forms will resist the new, not because the new is worse but because the old is familiar and comfortable.

On the Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5 opens the greatest single discourse in the Gospel tradition and one of the most influential ethical documents in human history. Its structure is precise and deliberate. It opens with the eight Beatitudes — each beginning "Blessed are" (*makarioi*, μακάριοι in the Greek) — which function not as commands but as declarations of the paradoxical reversals that characterize the kingdom of heaven: the poor in spirit possess the kingdom; the mourners are comforted; the meek inherit the earth; the persecuted rejoice.

The Beatitudes are followed by two metaphors of vocation (salt of the earth, light of the world) and then by the most structurally distinctive section of the chapter: the six Antitheses. Each follows the same formal pattern: "Ye have heard that it was said… but I say unto you." The formula is without parallel in Jewish literature. A rabbi might say "it is written" or "the tradition teaches"; no rabbi said "but I say unto you" as a contrast to the Torah itself. The authority

implied is either the authority of God himself or an unprecedented prophetic claim. The crowds at the end of the Sermon (Matthew 7:28–29) react to exactly this quality: "he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes."

The six antitheses address: anger as equivalent to murder; lust as equivalent to adultery; divorce and its moral consequences; the prohibition of oaths in favor of simple truthful speech; the replacement of retaliatory justice ("an eye for an eye") with non-resistance and generosity; and the extension of love from neighbors to enemies. Each antithesis deepens the Mosaic commandment from external behavior to interior disposition. The Sermon does not abrogate the law — Jesus has explicitly stated "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil" — but it radicalizes it: the righteousness required for the kingdom of heaven must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, reaching the interior of the person rather than resting in outward compliance.

The final antithesis — "Love your enemies" — is the most demanding and the most distinctive command in the Sermon. It has no parallel in any ancient ethical tradition prior to Jesus. The Stoics counseled indifference to enemies; the Mosaic tradition commanded love of neighbor (Leviticus 19:18) but was silent on enemies. Jesus commands active love — prayer, goodwill, the extension of the same generosity God shows in sending rain on the just and the unjust alike — and grounds this command in the nature of God himself: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." The Greek word translated "perfect" is *teleios* (τέλειος) — meaning complete, whole, fully formed, reaching one's intended end — not "perfect" in the sense of moral flawlessness.

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Chapter Six

Matthew 6, Mark 3, Luke 6 — The Lord's Prayer; The Twelve Appointed

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Part Five: The Sabbath Controversy, the Twelve, and the Sermon Continued

Section 50 — The Man with the Withered Hand [Mark 3:1–6 / Luke 6:6–11]

And he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there who had his hand withered. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him.

And he saith unto the man that had his hand withered, Rise and stand forth in the midst. And he saith unto them, Is it lawful on the sabbath day to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and his hand was restored.

And the Pharisees went out, and straightway with the Herodians took counsel against him, how they might destroy him.

Section 51 — Withdrawal to the Sea; Great Multitudes Healed [Mark 3:7–12]

And Jesus with his disciples withdrew to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and from Judaea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and beyond the Jordan, and about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, hearing what great things he did, came unto him. And he spake to his disciples, that a little boat should wait on him because of the crowd, lest they should throng him: for he had healed many; insomuch that as many as had plagues pressed upon him that they might touch him.

And the unclean spirits, whensoever they beheld him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And he charged them much that they should not make him known.

Section 52 — The Appointment of the Twelve [Mark 3:13–19 / Luke 6:12–16]

And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray; and he continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called his disciples; and he chose from them twelve, whom also he named apostles:

Simon, whom he also named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip and Bartholomew, and Matthew and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Section 53 — The Sermon on the Mount: On Almsgiving [Matt 6:1–4]

Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward.

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

Section 54 — The Sermon on the Mount: On Prayer [Matt 6:5–8]

And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

And in praying use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

Section 55 — The Lord's Prayer [Matt 6:9–15]

After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Section 56 — The Sermon on the Mount: On Fasting [Matt 6:16–18]

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward.

But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father who is in secret: and thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall recompense thee.

Section 57 — Treasure in Heaven [Matt 6:19–21]

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.

Section 58 — The Lamp of the Body [Matt 6:22–23]

The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!

Section 59 — No Man Can Serve Two Masters [Matt 6:24]

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Section 60 — On Anxiety: The Birds and the Lilies [Matt 6:25–34]

Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?

Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?

And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Six

On the Sabbath Healing and the Hardening of Hearts

The healing of the man with the withered hand (Section 50) is one of five sabbath controversy narratives in the Synoptics and represents a decisive escalation of the conflict with the Pharisees. What is theologically decisive is a detail found only in Mark: Jesus looks at his opponents "with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their heart." This is one of the very few places in the Synoptic Gospels where Jesus's emotional state is described with such precision. The Greek word for "hardening" is *pōrōsis* (πώρωσις) — a medical term meaning the callus that forms over a broken bone, rendering it insensible. The Pharisees have watched a man suffer with a withered hand and have used his suffering as a legal trap. The anger Jesus feels is not petulance; it is the grief of someone who sees human beings more committed to their religious system than to human welfare.

The immediate consequence of the healing is the first formal conspiracy against Jesus's life: the Pharisees go out and take counsel with the Herodians — a remarkable coalition of religious conservatives and political supporters of the Herodian dynasty, groups normally antagonistic to one another — united by their common interest in removing Jesus.

On the Night of Prayer Before Choosing the Twelve

Luke alone records that before choosing the twelve apostles, Jesus spent the entire night in prayer on the mountain (Section 52). This is characteristic of Luke's consistent emphasis on Jesus's prayer life — he is the evangelist who most frequently notes Jesus withdrawing to pray. The night of prayer before a decision of this magnitude is presented without commentary; Luke simply records it and moves immediately to the morning appointment. The implication is left for the reader: the constitution of the apostolic community was not an administrative decision but a matter brought to God through the night.

The list of the Twelve appears in all three Synoptics and in Acts 1:13. The lists agree on all twelve names but differ slightly in order. All four lists divide into three groups of four with the same names consistently heading each group: Peter always first, Philip always fifth, James son of Alphaeus always ninth. Judas Iscariot always appears last, always with the notation that he became a traitor or betrayed Jesus.

On the Three Pillars of Jewish Piety

Matthew 6 (Sections 53–56) addresses the three foundational practices of Second Temple Jewish piety in a single structured unit. Each is treated with an identical three-part formal pattern: (1) the negative example of the hypocrites who perform the practice publicly for human approval; (2) the declaration that such practitioners "have received their reward" — a commercial term (*apechō*, ἀπέχω, used on ancient receipts meaning "paid in full"); and (3) the positive command to perform the practice in secret before the Father who sees in secret and will recompense.

The word "hypocrites" (*hypokritai*, ὑποκριταί) in Greek originally referred to stage actors — those who perform a role for an audience. Jesus's use of the word is precise: the problem is not the practice of almsgiving, prayer, or fasting but the transformation of these practices into performances for human approval. When the audience changes from God to men, the reward changes correspondingly: human admiration is what was sought, human admiration is all that is received.

On the Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer as given in Matthew 6:9–13 (Section 55) is the fuller of the two New Testament versions. Luke's version (Luke 11:2–4), given in response to a disciple's direct request to teach them to pray, is shorter and slightly different in wording. Most scholars regard the two as variations of the same prayer taught on different occasions.

The prayer divides naturally into two halves. The first half concerns God — the hallowing of his name, the coming of his kingdom, the doing of his will on earth as in heaven. The second half concerns human need — daily bread, forgiveness of debts conditioned on the forgiveness of others, and deliverance from temptation and the evil one.

The Greek word translated "daily" (*epiousios*, ἐπιούσιος) is one of the rarest words in the entire Greek language — it appears nowhere else in ancient literature outside this prayer and its Lukan parallel. Its exact meaning remains debated: it may mean "for today," "for the coming day," "for subsistence," or "necessary for existence." Most translators follow the traditional

"daily," which captures the sense of bread that meets the need of the present moment rather than surplus stored for security.

The conditional character of the forgiveness petition is striking and unique among the petitions: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Jesus immediately elaborates this condition after the prayer itself (verses 14–15), making the forgiveness of others the stated condition for receiving God's forgiveness. This is the only petition in the prayer given an explicit explanatory extension, underscoring its weight in Jesus's ethical teaching.

On Treasure, the Eye, and Mammon

The three brief sayings of Sections 57–59 form a connected argument about the relationship between the heart and material possessions. The first locates the heart wherever the treasure is — a psychological observation as much as a theological command. The second uses the ancient understanding of the eye as the organ through which light enters the person: if the eye is "single" (*haplous*, ἁπλοῦς — which also carries the meaning "generous" or "undivided in loyalty") the whole body is illuminated; if the eye is "evil" (*ponēros*, πονηρός — which also carries the meaning "stingy" or "grasping") the whole interior is dark. The connection to wealth is deliberate: a miserly eye darkens the whole person.

The third makes the logical conclusion unavoidable: divided loyalty between God and wealth is structurally impossible. The Aramaic word *mammon* (מָמוֹן) left untranslated in both Matthew and Luke does not mean money in general but specifically wealth regarded as a value in itself, wealth elevated to the status of a master. Jesus does not say that wealth is evil; he says it cannot be served alongside God.

On Anxiety and the Lilies of the Field

The teaching on anxiety (Section 60) is the climax of Matthew 6 and one of the most personally directed passages in the Sermon on the Mount. The Greek word translated "anxious" (*merimnaō*, μεριμνάω) means literally to have the mind divided or pulled apart — anxiety as a condition of mental fragmentation, pulling the person between the present and an imagined threatening future.

Jesus does not command the suppression of all practical care; he commands a reordering of priorities rooted in the Father's provision. The two illustrations move from the lower to the higher: birds are fed without sowing or reaping; wildflowers are clothed more gloriously than Solomon in all his royal splendor. The argument from lesser to greater — the standard rabbinic form — concludes: if God clothes the grass that is here today and burned tomorrow, how much more will he clothe his own children?

The chapter's concluding command — "But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" — is the positive summary of the entire chapter's teaching. The kingdom of God and his righteousness are to occupy the place that anxiety about food and clothing occupies in the ordinary human consciousness. The final word is both realistic and gently ironic: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Tomorrow will bring its own difficulties; the disciple need not import them into today.

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Part Six: The Conclusion of the Sermon and the Ministry in Galilee

Section 61 — Judge Not [Matt 7:1–5]

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye?

Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Section 62 — Pearls Before Swine [Matt 7:6]

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you.

Section 63 — Ask, Seek, Knock [Matt 7:7–11]

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent?

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

Section 64 — The Golden Rule [Matt 7:12]

All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Section 65 — The Narrow Gate [Matt 7:13–14]

Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.

Section 66 — False Prophets and the Test of Fruit [Matt 7:15–20]

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Section 67 — Not Everyone Who Says Lord, Lord [Matt 7:21–23]

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Section 68 — The Two Builders: Rock and Sand [Matt 7:24–27]

Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock.

And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof.

Section 69 — The Crowd's Response: He Taught as One Having Authority [Matt 7:28–29 / Mark 3:20–21]

And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were astonished at his teaching: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

And he cometh into a house. And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when his friends heard it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

Section 70 — The Healing of the Centurion's Servant [Matt 8:5–13 / Luke 7:1–10]

And when he had ended all his sayings in the ears of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick and at the point of death. And when he heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant. And they, when they came to Jesus, besought him earnestly, saying, He is worthy that thou shouldest do this for him; for he loveth our nation, and himself built us our synagogue.

And Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed.

For I also am a man set under authority, having under myself soldiers: and I say to this one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

And when Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned and said unto the multitude that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole.

Section 71 — The Raising of the Widow's Son at Nain [Luke 7:11–17]

And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went to a city called Nain; and his disciples went with him, and a great multitude.

Now when he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, there was carried out one that was dead, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came nigh and touched the bier: and the bearers stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother.

And fear took hold on all: and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is arisen among us: and, God hath visited his people. And this report went forth concerning him in the whole of Judaea, and all the region round about.

Section 72 — John the Baptist's Question from Prison [Matt 11:2–6 / Luke 7:18–23]

And the disciples of John told him of all these things. And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to the Lord, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?

And when the men were come unto him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?

In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered and said unto them, Go and tell John the things which ye hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in me.

Section 73 — Jesus's Testimony Concerning John [Matt 11:7–15 / Luke 7:24–30]

And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to say unto the multitudes concerning John,

What went ye out into the wilderness to behold? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out to see? a man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,

Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, Who shall prepare thy way before thee.

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, that is to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Section 74 — This Generation: The Children in the Marketplace [Matt 11:16–19 / Luke 7:31–35]

But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, who call unto their fellows and say,

We piped unto you, and ye did not dance; we wailed, and ye did not mourn.

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.

And wisdom is justified by her works.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Seven

On the Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 7 contains the third and final chapter of the Sermon on the Mount, and its structure is deliberately culminating. It moves from the personal (how one sees one's brother) to the universal (the two ways, the two trees, the two builders) before ending with the crowd's astonished recognition that this teacher differs fundamentally from all teachers they have known.

The Sermon began with the Beatitudes — declarations of blessing for those who are poor in spirit, mourning, meek, hungry for righteousness. It moves through the antitheses (the radicalization of the Mosaic commands), the three pillars of piety (almsgiving, prayer, fasting), teaching on treasure and anxiety, and now concludes with a cluster of sayings that function as a summation and a challenge.

On Judging and the Beam in the Eye

The command "Judge not" (Section 61) is among the most quoted and most misunderstood sayings in the Gospels. The Greek *mē krinete* is a present imperative of prohibition — "stop judging" or "do not make it your habit to judge." The context, and what follows in the same passage, makes clear that Jesus is not prohibiting all evaluation of conduct — Section 66 explicitly commands discernment of false prophets "by their fruits," and verse 6 commands discrimination in the sharing of holy things. What is prohibited is the posture of the person who magnifies another's small fault (the mote, or speck, of dust) while ignoring his own disabling fault (the beam, or plank, of timber). The hyperbolic disproportion — a speck versus a structural timber — is deliberately comic and self-implicating.

On the Golden Rule

The Golden Rule (Section 64) — "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" — is unique in its positive formulation. Many ancient traditions, including Confucian ethics, Tobit 4:15, and later rabbinic literature, contain the negative form: "Do not do to others what you would not have done to you." Jesus's positive formulation requires active initiative rather than mere restraint. Matthew's addition — "for this is the law and the prophets" — presents the Golden Rule not as a replacement for the Old Testament but as its ethical summary, parallel to the double commandment of love (Matthew 22:37–40).

On the Narrow Gate

The image of the narrow gate and the broad way (Section 65) has generated enormous interpretive discussion. The Greek *stenē* (narrow, tight, constricting) and *tethlimmenē* (straitened, pressed, afflicted — from *thlibō*, the verb used for the pressure of persecution) describe the way of life not as intrinsically pleasant or easy but as the only way that arrives at life. The broad road is broad precisely because it requires nothing — no repentance, no moral reconstruction, no willingness to be seen as few. The saying does not define who the "few" are with any demographic precision; it is an urgent personal invitation to choose the difficult road rather than a theological calculation about the proportion of the saved.

On "I Never Knew You"

Section 67 contains one of the most alarming sayings in the entire Sermon. It is addressed not to the obviously irreligious but to people who have prophesied, cast out demons, and performed "many mighty works" in Jesus's name — people whose religious résumé is impressive by any ordinary standard. The verdict pronounced over them is the most devastating possible: "I never knew you." The Greek *egnōn* is the aorist of *ginōskō*, the verb of intimate personal knowledge. The problem is not the works; the problem is the absence of a relationship of mutual knowing. "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity" — the word *iniquity* (*anomia*) means literally lawlessness, the absence of conformity to God's will. Works performed without the foundation of genuine relationship to God are ultimately lawless however religious they appear.

On the Two Builders

The parable of the two builders (Section 68) brings the entire Sermon to its structural close with a double image of extraordinary vividness. In the Palestinian setting, the distinction between rock and sand would have been immediately understood: the limestone bedrock of the hillsides versus the sandy wadis (dry riverbeds) that appear stable in summer but become violent torrents in the rainy season. A house built in a wadi on the dry sandy floor looks fine for months — until the rains come. Jesus applies the image without elaboration: "Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them" is the rock builder; "every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not" builds on sand. The distinction is not between those who hear and those who do not hear — it is between those who hear and do, and those who hear and do not. Both have heard the Sermon. One obeys; one does not. The storm is identical for both. The outcome is not.

On the Centurion's Faith

The healing of the centurion's servant (Section 70) introduces into the Gospel narrative the first explicit commendation of Gentile faith over Jewish faith. The centurion is a Roman military officer — precisely the kind of representative of the occupying power that Jewish nationalism despised — and Jesus says of him: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Matthew's account (8:5–13) omits the mediation of the Jewish elders and the second group of friends, suggesting a more direct approach. Luke's layered account, with the elders pleading the centurion's worthiness and the centurion himself then sending friends to forestall Jesus's visit, presents a more complex social and cultural picture. Both accounts preserve the centurion's central word: "Say the word, and my servant shall be healed." The military analogy he draws —

I command and am obeyed; so may you command from where you stand — is an act of theological imagination: he has understood, from outside Israel's covenant, something about Jesus's authority that insiders have not yet grasped.

On the Raising at Nain

The raising of the widow's son at Nain (Section 71) appears only in Luke and is the first resurrection miracle in the Synoptic narrative sequence. Three details are theologically significant. First, Jesus acts without being asked — he sees the widow's grief and is moved by compassion before any request is made. Second, he touches the bier — an act of ritual defilement under the Levitical code, as touching the dead rendered one unclean. As with his touching of the leper (Section 34), the defilement does not pass from the dead to Jesus; life passes from Jesus to the dead. Third, Luke's language is deliberate: "he gave him to his mother" echoes almost exactly the LXX of 1 Kings 17:23, where Elijah restores the widow of Zarephath's son — "and he gave him to his mother." The crowd's response — "A great prophet is arisen among us" — confirms that the echo is intentional.

On John's Question and Jesus's Answer

John's question from prison — "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" (Section 72) — is among the most humanly candid moments in the Gospel narrative. John, who had proclaimed Jesus as the Coming One with such certainty at the Jordan, is now imprisoned by Herod Antipas, apparently expecting a different kind of messianic intervention than what Jesus is providing. Jesus's answer is itself a quotation — a mosaic of Isaiah 35:5–6 and 61:1 — describing the signs of the messianic age: blind receiving sight, lame walking, lepers cleansed, deaf hearing, dead raised, poor having good news preached to them. The answer is an implicit "yes" that requires John to revise his understanding of what the Messiah comes to do.

Jesus's commendation of John that follows (Section 73) is the most extravagant praise of any human being in the Gospel record: "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." And then, immediately, the paradox: "yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." John stands at the threshold of the new age but does not enter it; the least citizen of the kingdom Jesus brings stands in a relationship to God that exceeds even John's prophetic greatness. The declaration that John is Elijah "that is to come" identifies him as the forerunner of Malachi 4:5 — a claim that the disciples later find perplexing in connection with the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:10–13).

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Chapter Eight

Matthew 8–12, Mark 3–4, Luke 7–8 — Parables; Beelzebub; The Storm

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Part Seven: The Anointing, the Beelzebub Controversy, the Parables, and the Storm

Section 75 — The Sinful Woman Who Anointed Jesus [Luke 7:36–50]

And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

And behold, a woman who was in the city, a sinner; and when she knew that he was sitting at meat in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, and standing behind at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Now when the Pharisee that had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him, that she is a sinner.

And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Teacher, say on.

A certain lender had two debtors: the one owed five hundred shillings, and the other fifty. When they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?

Simon answered and said, He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

And turning to the woman, he said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss: but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but she hath anointed my feet with ointment.

Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that even forgiveth sins?

And he said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Section 76 — Women Who Ministered to Jesus [Luke 8:1–3]

And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God, and with him the twelve, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna the wife of Chuzas Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered unto them of their substance.

Section 77 — The Beelzebub Accusation [Matt 12:22–24 / Mark 3:22–27 / Luke 11:14–15]

Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the dumb man spake and saw.

And all the multitudes were amazed, and said, Can this be the son of David?

But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This man doth not cast out demons, but by Beelzebub the prince of the demons.

And the scribes that came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and, By the prince of the demons casteth he out the demons.

Section 78 — Jesus Answers the Accusation [Matt 12:25–37 / Mark 3:23–30 / Luke 11:17–23]

And knowing their thoughts he said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?

And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you.

Or how can one enter into the house of the strong man, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.

Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by its fruit. Ye offspring of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

Section 79 — The Sign of Jonah [Matt 12:38–42 / Luke 11:29–32]

Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, Teacher, we would see a sign from thee.

But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet: for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here.

The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

Section 80 — His True Family [Matt 12:46–50 / Mark 3:31–35 / Luke 8:19–21]

While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, seeking to speak to him. And one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, seeking to speak to thee.

But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Section 81 — The Parable of the Sower [Matt 13:1–9 / Mark 4:1–9 / Luke 8:4–8]

And on that day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And there were gathered unto him great multitudes, so that he entered into a boat, and sat; and all the multitude stood on the beach.

And he spake to them many things in parables, saying, Behold, the sower went forth to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the birds came and devoured them: and others

fell upon the rocky places, where they had not much earth: and straightway they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell upon the thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them: and others fell upon the good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

He that hath ears, let him hear.

Section 82 — Why Jesus Speaks in Parables [Matt 13:10–17 / Mark 4:10–12 / Luke 8:9–10]

And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

And he answered and said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith,

By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, And their ears are dull of hearing, And their eyes they have closed; Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And should turn again, And I should heal them.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not.

Section 83 — The Explanation of the Sower [Matt 13:18–23 / Mark 4:13–20 / Luke 8:11–15]

Hear then ye the parable of the sower.

When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the evil one, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart. This is he that was sown by the way side.

And he that was sown upon the rocky places, this is he that heareth the word, and straightway with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but endureth for a while; and when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, straightway he stumbleth.

And he that was sown among the thorns, this is he that heareth the word; and the care of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

And he that was sown upon the good ground, this is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; who verily beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Section 84 — The Lamp Under the Bushel [Mark 4:21–25 / Luke 8:16–18]

And he said unto them, Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be put on the stand? For there is nothing hid, save that it should be manifested; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light.

If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you; and more shall be given unto you. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath.

Section 85 — The Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly [Mark 4:26–29]

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth; and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he knoweth not how. The earth beareth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the fruit is ripe, straightway he putteth forth the sickle, because the harvest is come.

Section 86 — The Parable of the Mustard Seed [Matt 13:31–32 / Mark 4:30–32]

Another parable set he before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is less than all seeds; but when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the heaven come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Section 87 — Jesus's Use of Parables Fulfils Scripture [Matt 13:34–35 / Mark 4:33–34]

All these things spake Jesus in parables unto the multitudes; and without a parable spake he nothing unto them: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying,

I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.

But privately to his own disciples he expounded all things.

Section 88 — The Stilling of the Storm [Matt 8:23–27 / Mark 4:35–41 / Luke 8:22–25]

And on that day, when even was come, he saith unto them, Let us go over unto the other side.

And leaving the multitude, they take him with them, even as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him.

And there ariseth a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the boat, insomuch that the boat was now filling. And he himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion: and they awake him, and say unto him, Teacher, carest thou not that we perish?

And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?

And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Eight

On the Anointing at Simon's House

The anointing of Jesus by the sinful woman (Section 75) is one of the most tender scenes in the Gospel narrative. Luke places it at the home of Simon the Pharisee, explicitly distinct from the later anointing at Bethany (Matthew 26:6–13; Mark 14:3–9; John 12:1–8). The woman is unnamed in Luke. She has heard that Jesus is dining in the city, and she comes — uninvited, carrying her alabaster flask — and stands behind him at his feet, weeping. In the reclining posture of a first-century Jewish meal, the feet would extend away from the table, making her act of washing his feet with her tears physically plausible.

The parable of the two debtors that Jesus tells Simon is elegant in its simplicity: the one who is forgiven more loves more. The application is devastating: Simon, the host, has performed none of the ordinary courtesies of hospitality — no water for the feet, no greeting kiss, no anointing oil. The woman, the uninvited sinner, has provided all of them, in excess and in tears. "Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." The logic is not that love earns forgiveness but that the magnitude of one's love reveals the depth of one's awareness of how much one has been forgiven. The Pharisee's coolness toward Jesus reveals how little he imagines himself to need.

On the Women Disciples

Section 76 — Luke's note about the women who traveled with Jesus and the Twelve and "ministered unto them of their substance" — is one of the most historically significant verses in the Gospel narrative. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many others are named or acknowledged as part of the traveling company supporting Jesus's ministry financially. This

detail, unique to Luke, underscores his consistent attention to women in the Gospel story and provides a concrete historical account of how the itinerant ministry was sustained. Mary Magdalene appears here for the first and only time before the passion narrative, identified as one from whom seven demons had gone out.

On the Beelzebub Controversy

The Beelzebub accusation (Sections 77–78) represents the sharpest formal conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities up to this point in the narrative. The accusation is not that Jesus lacks power but that his power has a demonic source. Jesus's response operates on three levels. First, the logical argument: a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand; if Satan casts out Satan, his domain is already finished. Second, the challenge: by what power do the Pharisees' own exorcists work? They cannot claim that all Jewish exorcism is demonic without condemning their own practice. Third, the positive claim: if Jesus casts out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has arrived.

The teaching on the unpardonable sin — the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit — emerges directly from this controversy. Jesus has just performed a healing that the crowd interprets as messianic and the Pharisees attribute to Satan. The blasphemy against the Spirit is specifically the act of attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan — the deliberate, eyes-open reversal of good and evil at the deepest level. Every other sin and blasphemy, including speaking against the Son of Man himself, is forgivable; this is not. The warning is absolute and the severity of its language in all three Synoptics is consistent.

On the Parables

Chapter eight marks the major parable discourse of the Galilean ministry. Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8 all present the Parable of the Sower as the foundational parable — the key that unlocks the parabolic method itself. Jesus explains this in his answer to the disciples' question (Section 82): the parables simultaneously reveal truth to those who are ready to receive it and conceal it from those who are not. The language he quotes from Isaiah 6:9–10 is the same passage that Paul will later apply to the Jewish response to the gospel (Acts 28:26–27). The parable is thus not merely a pedagogical technique but a fulfillment of the prophetic pattern in which God's word divides those who hear it.

The explanation of the Sower (Section 83) is the only parable in the Synoptic Gospels that Jesus explicitly interprets in full detail, making it the reader's primary guide to understanding all the others. The four soils — the path, the rocky ground, the thorny ground, and the good soil — correspond to four ways of receiving the word of the kingdom. Only the fourth bears lasting fruit; the first three all begin with hearing and all fail at different stages and for different reasons: immediate theft by the evil one, immediate joy without depth, and gradual choking by worldly cares and deceitfulness of riches.

On the Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly

The Parable of the Seed Growing Secretly (Section 85) appears only in Mark and is one of the most overlooked parables in the Synoptic tradition. Its central point is the hiddenness and autonomy of the kingdom's growth: the farmer sows and then sleeps and rises while the seed

grows through stages he cannot see or control. The Greek *automatē* — "of herself," used of the earth producing fruit — is the word from which our word "automatic" derives. The kingdom is not the product of human industry; it grows by its own divine life. The farmer's role is to sow and to harvest; the growing happens without him.

On the Stilling of the Storm

The stilling of the storm (Section 88) is the first nature miracle in the Synoptic narrative and one of the most vivid scenes in all four chapters of Mark's account used in this harmony. Three details in Mark's account carry particular weight. First, Jesus is asleep "on the cushion" — a specific, eyewitness-quality detail that appears only in Mark, suggesting Petrine testimony. Second, the disciples' rebuke — "Carest thou not that we perish?" — is more emotionally raw than Matthew's "Lord, save us; we perish." Third, Jesus's response to the calmed sea uses the Greek *siōpa, pephimōso* — "Be silent, be muzzled" — the same formula used in his rebuke of the unclean spirit in Capernaum (Mark 1:25), treating the storm with the same authority as a demonic force.

The disciples' question at the end — "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" — is the question the entire narrative of chapter eight has been building toward. Every miracle, every parable, every controversy has been press-ing toward this question of identity. The disciples have been with him; they have watched everything; and they still do not fully know who he is. Their question is not rhetorical — it is genuine, and it echoes through the rest of the Synoptic narrative until Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi.

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Chapter Nine

Matthew 9–10, Mark 5–6, Luke 8–9 — Miracles; The Mission Discourse; The Feeding of the Five Thousand

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Part Eight: Miracles, Mission, and the Feeding of the Multitude

Section 89 — The Gerasene Demoniac [Matt 8:28–34 / Mark 5:1–20 / Luke 8:26–39]

And they came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gerasenes.

And when he was come out of the boat, straightway there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling in the tombs: and no man could any more bind him, no, not with a chain; because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been rent asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: and no man had strength to tame him. And always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out, and cutting himself with stones.

And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshipped him; and crying out with a loud voice, he saith, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, torment me not.

For he said unto him, Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man.

And he asked him, What is thy name? And he saith unto him, My name is Legion; for we are many.

And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there on the mountain side a great herd of swine feeding. And they besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And he gave them leave.

And the unclean spirits came out, and entered into the swine: and the herd rushed down the steep into the sea, in number about two thousand; and they were drowned in the sea.

And they that fed them fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they came to see what it was that had come to pass. And they come to Jesus, and behold him that was possessed with demons sitting, clothed and in his right mind, even him that had the legion: and they were afraid.

And they that saw it declared unto them how it befell him that was possessed with demons, and concerning the swine. And they began to beseech him to depart from their borders.

And as he was entering into the boat, he that had been possessed with demons besought him that he might be with him. And he suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he had mercy on thee. And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men marvelled.

Section 90 — Jairus's Daughter and the Woman with the Issue of Blood [Matt 9:18–26 / Mark 5:21–43 / Luke 8:40–56]

And when Jesus had crossed over again in the boat unto the other side, a great multitude was gathered unto him; and he was by the sea.

And there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and seeing him, he falleth at his feet, and beseecheth him much, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death: I pray thee, that thou come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be made whole, and live.

And he went with him; and a great multitude followed him, and they thronged him.

And a woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, having heard the things concerning Jesus, came in the crowd behind, and touched his garment. For she said, If I touch but his garments, I shall be made whole.

And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her plague.

And straightway Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power proceeding from him had gone forth, turned him about in the crowd, and said, Who touched my garments?

And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what had been done to her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

While he yet spake, they come from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Teacher any further?

But Jesus, not heeding the word spoken, saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Fear not, only believe.

And he suffered no man to follow with him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

And they come to the house of the ruler of the synagogue; and he beholdeth a tumult, and many weeping and wailing greatly. And when he was entered in, he saith unto them, Why make ye a tumult, and weep? the child is not dead, but sleepeth.

And they laughed him to scorn.

But he, having put them all forth, taketh the father of the child and her mother and them that were with him, and goeth in where the child was. And taking the child by the hand, he saith unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise.

And straightway the damsel rose up, and walked; for she was twelve years old. And they were amazed straightway with a great amazement.

And he charged them much that no man should know this: and he commanded that something should be given her to eat.

Section 91 — The Healing of Two Blind Men [Matt 9:27–31]

And as Jesus passed by from thence, two blind men followed him, crying out, and saying, Have mercy on us, thou son of David.

And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you. And their eyes were opened.

And Jesus strictly charged them, saying, See that no man know it. But they went forth, and spread abroad his fame in all that land.

Section 92 — The Healing of a Mute Demoniac [Matt 9:32–34]

And as they went forth, behold, there was brought to him a dumb man possessed with a demon. And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

But the Pharisees said, By the prince of the demons casteth he out demons.

Section 93 — Jesus's Compassion for the Harassed Multitudes [Matt 9:35–38]

And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.

Section 94 — The Second Rejection at Nazareth [Mark 6:1–6]

And he went out from thence; and he cometh into his own country; and his disciples follow him. And when the sabbath was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, Whence hath this man these things? and, What is the wisdom that is given unto this man, and what mean such mighty works wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?

And they were offended in him.

And Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief.

Section 95 — The Sending Out of the Twelve [Matt 10:1–42 / Mark 6:7–13 / Luke 9:1–6]

And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and he gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

And he charged them, saying unto them, Take nothing for the journey, save a staff only; no bread, no wallet, no money in their purse; but go shod with sandals: and put not on two coats. And he said unto them, Wheresoever ye enter into a house, there abide till ye depart thence. And whatsoever place shall not receive you, and they hear you not, as ye go forth thence, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony unto them.

These twelve Jesus sent forth, and charged them, saying,

Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons: freely ye received, freely give.

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you.

And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law: and a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Section 96 — The Death of John the Baptist [Matt 14:1–12 / Mark 6:14–29 / Luke 9:7–9]

At that season Herod the tetrarch heard the report concerning Jesus: and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore do these powers work in him.

For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she should ask. And she, being put forward by her mother, saith, Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.

And the king was grieved; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them that sat at meat with him, he commanded it to be given; and he sent and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought on a platter, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the corpse, and buried him; and they went and told Jesus.

Section 97 — The Return of the Twelve; Withdrawal [Mark 6:30–32 / Luke 9:10]

And the apostles gather themselves together unto Jesus; and they told him all things, whatsoever they had done, and whatsoever they had taught. And he saith unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while. For there were many coming and going,

and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desert place apart.

Section 98 — The Feeding of the Five Thousand [Matt 14:13–21 / Mark 6:33–44 / Luke 9:11–17]

And the multitudes saw them going, and many knew them, and they ran together there on foot from all the cities, and outwent them. And he came forth and saw a great multitude, and he had compassion on them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, The place is desert, and the day is now far spent; send them away, that they may go into the country and villages round about, and buy themselves somewhat to eat.

But he answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred shillings worth of bread, and give them to eat?

And he saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

And he commanded them that all should sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake the loaves; and he gave to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

And they all ate, and were filled. And they took up broken pieces, twelve basketfuls, and also of the fishes. And they that ate the loaves were five thousand men.

Section 99 — Jesus Walks on the Water [Matt 14:22–33 / Mark 6:45–52]

And straightway he constrained his disciples to enter into the boat, and to go before him unto the other side to Bethsaida, while he himself sendeth the multitude away.

And after he had taken leave of them, he departed into the mountain to pray.

And when even was come, the boat was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. And seeing them distressed in rowing, for the wind was contrary unto them, about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking on the sea; and he would have passed by them: but they, when they saw him walking on the sea, supposed that it was a ghost, and cried out: for they all saw him, and were troubled.

But he straightway spake with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters. And he said, Come. And Peter went down from the boat, and walked upon the waters to come to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, Lord, save me.

And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and took hold of him, and saith unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

And when they were gone up into the boat, the wind ceased. And they that were in the boat worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Nine

On the Gerasene Demoniac

The healing of the Gerasene demoniac (Section 89) is the most dramatic exorcism in the Synoptic Gospels. Several details deserve attention. The man's self-description — "My name is Legion; for we are many" — borrows the Roman military term for a unit of approximately six thousand soldiers. The irony is stark: Judea groaned under Roman military occupation, and the most concentrated symbol of Roman power has entered the language of demonic self-identification. The detail that the herd of swine numbered "about two thousand" is characteristic of Mark's eyewitness precision.

The man's response to his healing — sitting clothed and in his right mind — contrasts in every particular with his condition before: naked, among the tombs, uncontrollable, crying out, cutting himself with stones. The townspeople, rather than rejoicing, beg Jesus to leave their borders. The healed man begs to go with Jesus and is refused: instead Jesus gives him the first formal missionary commission in the Gospel narrative — *"Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee."* He becomes the first evangelist to the Gentile Decapolis region.

On Jairus's Daughter and the Interrupted Healing

The story of Jairus's daughter (Section 90) is unique in the Synoptic tradition as an interrupted miracle — a healing narrative that pauses for another healing narrative before reaching its conclusion. The intercalation (the "Markan sandwich" technique) is deliberate and theologically meaningful: both healings involve women; both involve the number twelve (the woman bled for twelve years; the girl was twelve years old); both are healed by faith; and the delay caused by the woman's healing is precisely what allows the girl to die before Jesus arrives — setting up the escalation from healing to resurrection.

The woman's cure is the most detailed healing account in the harmony so far. Mark's version gives her medical history — twelve years of suffering, many physicians, all her money spent, growing worse rather than better — before describing her act of faith. She touches the hem of Jesus's garment from behind, believing herself unseen. His immediate awareness that power had gone out of him, his turning in the crowd, his question — these details all suggest a genuine event recalled by an eyewitness with a specific perspective.

The Aramaic words preserved at the moment of the girl's raising — *Talitha cumi* — are among the handful of Aramaic phrases that Mark retains untranslated before giving the Greek

equivalent. Their preservation suggests they were remembered as the actual words spoken, carrying an authority that Greek translation could convey but not fully replace.

On the Mission Discourse

The Mission Discourse of Matthew 10 (Section 95) is the second of Matthew's five great discourses and is addressed specifically to the Twelve as they are sent out on their first independent mission. Its scope, however, extends well beyond the immediate Galilean mission: the warnings about being brought before governors and kings, the sayings about family division, and the promise that he who endures to the end shall be saved all anticipate a much longer and more dangerous mission than a brief preaching tour of Israelite villages. Matthew has gathered here both immediate instructions and longer-range prophetic warnings about the church's future mission in a single discourse.

The saying about the sword — "I came not to send peace, but a sword" — is among the most deliberately startling sayings in Matthew's Gospel, coming from the teacher who has just completed the Sermon on the Mount's teaching on peacemaking and love of enemies. The sword here is not the sword of warfare but the sword of division: Jesus's presence and teaching cuts through the most intimate human loyalties, setting family members against one another along the line of allegiance to him. The parallel in Luke 12:51 uses the word "division" rather than "sword," suggesting that the two are equivalent in meaning.

On the Death of John the Baptist

The death of John (Section 96) is the darkest episode in the narrative sequence of chapter nine. The story is told by all three Synoptists but with the fullest detail in Mark. Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, had imprisoned John for publicly denouncing his marriage to Herodias, his brother Philip's wife — a marriage forbidden by Levitical law (Leviticus 18:16; 20:21). Herod is presented in Mark as simultaneously fearing John, protecting him, enjoying listening to him, yet baffled by him — a portrait of a man in moral suspension who lacks the resolution to do either the right thing or the consistent wrong thing, and is therefore manipulated by Herodias into the worst act of all.

The birthday dance, the oath, the mother's instruction, the girl's request, and Herod's inability to refuse in the presence of his guests — the sequence has the quality of a moral tragedy in miniature. The greatest prophet born of woman (as Jesus has called him) dies by the political vanity of a small man on a birthday. John's disciples come, take the body, bury it, and go to tell Jesus.

On the Feeding of the Five Thousand

The feeding of the five thousand (Section 98) is the only miracle, apart from the resurrection, recorded in all four Gospels. It occurs on the heels of the news of John's death, when Jesus withdraws — and is followed by the crowds across the water. The sequence of actions over the five loaves and two fish — taking, blessing, breaking, giving — is exactly the sequence used at the Last Supper (Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19), and the early church read the feeding miracle through a eucharistic lens. The twelve basketfuls of fragments collected after five

thousand are fed carries its own implicit commentary: the abundance generated by the miracle exceeds the abundance that existed before it began.

On Walking on the Water

The account of Jesus walking on the water (Section 99) appears in Matthew and Mark but not in Luke. Matthew's version is the only one that includes Peter's walking — and sinking. The fourth watch of the night (3–6 a.m.) places the event in the darkest hours before dawn. The phrase "he would have passed by them" in Mark is puzzling and has generated much discussion; it may echo the language of divine theophany in the Old Testament, where God "passes by" before the face of Moses and Elijah (Exodus 33:22; 1 Kings 19:11). The disciples' response to his entry into the boat — "Of a truth thou art the Son of God" — is the first full confession of Jesus's divine identity by the disciples in Matthew's narrative, anticipating Peter's fuller confession at Caesarea Philippi.

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Part Nine: Controversy, Confession, and the Transfiguration

Section 100 — The Tradition of the Elders: Clean and Unclean [Matt 15:1–20 / Mark 7:1–23]

Then there come to Jesus from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God said, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is given to God; he shall not honor his father. And ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying,

This people honoreth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.

And he called to him the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man.

Then came the disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying?

But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit.

And Peter answered and said unto him, Declare unto us the parable.

And he said, Are ye also even yet without understanding? Perceive ye not, that whatsoever goeth into the mouth passeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man.

Section 101 — The Syrophoenician Woman [Matt 15:21–28 / Mark 7:24–30]

And Jesus went out thence, and withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanitish woman came out from those borders, and cried, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a demon.

But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

But he answered and said, I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

But she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

And he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.

But she said, Yea, Lord: for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

Section 102 — The Healing of the Deaf and Mute Man [Mark 7:31–37]

And again he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis.

And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to lay his hand upon him.

And he took him aside from the multitude privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it. And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; he maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

Section 103 — The Feeding of the Four Thousand [Matt 15:32–38 / Mark 8:1–9]

In those days, when there was again a great multitude, and they had nothing to eat, he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they

continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way; and some of them are come from far.

And his disciples answered him, Whence shall one be able to fill these men with bread here in a desert place?

And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

And he commandeth the multitude to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and having given thanks, he brake, and gave to his disciples, to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. And they had a few small fishes: and having blessed them, he commanded to set these also before them. And they ate, and were filled: and they took up, of broken pieces that remained over, seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand men.

Section 104 — The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees [Matt 16:1–12 / Mark 8:10–21]

And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and trying him asked him to show them a sign from heaven.

But he answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the heaven is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah.

And he left them, and departed.

And the disciples came to the other side and forgot to take bread. And Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, We took no bread.

And Jesus perceiving it said, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have no bread? Do ye not yet perceive, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

Then understood they that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Section 105 — The Healing of the Blind Man at Bethsaida [Mark 8:22–26]

And they come to Bethsaida. And they bring to him a blind man, and beseech him to touch him. And he took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village; and when he had spit on his eyes, and laid his hands upon him, he asked him, Seest thou aught?

And he looked up, and said, I see men; for I behold them as trees, walking.

Then again he laid his hands upon his eyes; and he looked stedfastly, and was restored, and saw all things clearly.

And he sent him away to his home, saying, Do not even enter into the village.

Section 106 — Peter's Confession at Caesarea Philippi [Matt 16:13–20 / Mark 8:27–30 / Luke 9:18–21]

Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of man is?

And they said, Some say John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am?

And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven.

And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Then charged he the disciples that they should tell no man that he was the Christ.

Section 107 — The First Passion Prediction [Matt 16:21–28 / Mark 8:31–9:1 / Luke 9:22–27]

From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up.

And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee.

But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto me; for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds.

Verily I say unto you, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

Section 108 — The Transfiguration [Matt 17:1–8 / Mark 9:2–8 / Luke 9:28–36]

And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: and he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his garments became white as the light.

And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with him.

And Peter answered, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.

While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one, save Jesus only.

And as they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen from the dead.

Section 109 — The Question About Elijah [Matt 17:9–13 / Mark 9:9–13]

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come?

And he answered and said, Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they listed. Even so shall the Son of man also suffer of them.

Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

Section 110 — The Healing of the Epileptic Boy [Matt 17:14–21 / Mark 9:14–29 / Luke 9:37–43]

And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a man, kneeling to him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is epileptic, and suffereth grievously; for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft-times into the water. And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I bear with you? bring him hither to me.

And Jesus rebuked him; and the demon went out from him: and the boy was cured from that hour.

Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast it out?

And he saith unto them, Because of your little faith: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Ten

On Clean and Unclean

The controversy over the washing of hands (Section 100) goes to the heart of the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. At stake is not mere hygiene but the authority of the Oral Torah — the tradition of the elders that the Pharisees regarded as equally binding with the written law. Jesus's counter-argument is devastating: the tradition of Corban (a vow dedicating resources to God that effectively released children from supporting aging parents) allowed a man to violate the written commandment to honor father and mother. The tradition, in this case, had become a mechanism for nullifying God's actual word.

The teaching that follows — what goes into the mouth does not defile; what comes out of the heart does — is among the most radical statements in the Synoptic tradition. Mark's version (7:19) adds the editorial note that Jesus thereby "made all meats clean" — a conclusion with enormous implications for the Gentile mission and one that the Jerusalem church did not immediately or easily absorb, as Acts 10–11 and Galatians 2 both attest.

On the Syrophoenician Woman

The exchange with the Syrophoenician woman (Section 101) is the most theologically unsettling dialogue in the Synoptic Gospels. Jesus initially refuses to respond; when pressed, he states that he was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel; when pressed further, he uses the word "dogs" — a conventional Jewish term of contempt for Gentiles. The woman does not contest the characterization. She accepts it and turns it: even the dogs eat the crumbs from the master's table. Jesus's response — "O woman, great is thy faith: be it done unto thee even as thou wilt" — is the second time in the Gospel narrative that he has commended Gentile faith as surpassing anything found in Israel (the first being the centurion of Section 70).

The exchange has generated enormous interpretive discussion precisely because of its difficulty. The most honest reading is that Jesus is testing the woman — using the conventional language of ethnic boundary to see whether her faith will transcend it. She passes. Her daughter is healed.

On the Two-Stage Healing at Bethsaida

The healing of the blind man at Bethsaida (Section 105) is unique in the Synoptic tradition as the only miracle in which Jesus's healing works in stages — the man first sees indistinctly ("I see men; for I behold them as trees, walking") before full sight is restored. The detail is so theologically awkward — suggesting a limitation in Jesus's healing power — that it is difficult to account for except as historical reminiscence. Mark is the only evangelist to record it. Many

commentators read the two-stage healing as a deliberate echo of the disciples' own two-stage coming to see who Jesus is: they have some sight, but not yet clear sight. The positioning of this miracle immediately before Peter's confession supports that reading.

On Peter's Confession

Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi (Section 106) is the structural turning point of the entire Synoptic narrative. Everything before it — miracles, controversies, parables, discourses — has been pressing toward the question: "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" And Peter's answer — "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" — is the first unambiguous human confession of Jesus's full identity in any of the three Gospels. Jesus's response to Peter is among the most debated passages in the New Testament, particularly the saying about "this rock" on which the church will be built and the "keys of the kingdom of heaven." Catholic tradition has read "this rock" as Peter himself; Protestant exegetes have commonly read it as the confession just made; the Greek (*petros/petra*) supports some ambiguity. What is not ambiguous is that the authority to bind and loose is real and formal.

On the First Passion Prediction

Immediately following the confession, Jesus makes the first explicit prediction of his suffering, death, and resurrection (Section 107). The sequence — confession followed immediately by passion prediction — is theologically deliberate in all three Synoptics: the moment the disciples acknowledge who Jesus is, he begins to tell them what he has come to do. Peter's rebuke — "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee" — and Jesus's response — "Get thee behind me, Satan" — represent the sharpest recorded confrontation between Jesus and any of his disciples. Peter has just received the highest commendation in the Gospel narrative and thirty seconds later receives the harshest rebuke. The contrast is intentional: the confession was revelation; the rebuke was the natural human mind rejecting the theology of the cross.

The call to take up the cross and follow (Section 107) is the first occurrence of cross-bearing language in Matthew and Mark. It cannot have been metaphorical to the disciples in the context of first-century Judea, where crucifixion was a familiar sight. The cross was the Roman instrument of execution; taking it up meant walking to one's own death. Jesus redefines discipleship as a willingness to do precisely that.

On the Transfiguration

The Transfiguration (Section 108) is the supreme moment of divine disclosure in the Synoptic Gospels, surpassing even the baptism — where only Jesus and John witness the divine voice. Here three disciples witness the transformation of Jesus's appearance, the appearance of Moses and Elijah, and the divine voice from the cloud. The Voice speaks the same words as at the baptism — "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" — with the addition of a single command: *"Hear ye him."*

Moses and Elijah represent the Law and the Prophets — the entirety of Israel's scriptural heritage — now appearing in conversation with Jesus. Luke alone tells us what they spoke of: "his departure which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" — using the Greek word *exodos*,

deliberately evoking the Exodus from Egypt. The conversation on the mountain is about what is about to happen in Jerusalem.

Peter's instinct to build three tabernacles — to make the moment permanent, to house all three equally — is interrupted by the cloud and the Voice before he can finish speaking. The command is not to tabernacle the vision but to hear Jesus. When the cloud lifts, Moses and Elijah are gone. "They saw no one, save Jesus only" — a phrase that functions as a theological summary of the entire scene.

The descent from the mountain immediately raises the question about Elijah (Section 109) — prompted by the disciples having just seen him. Jesus confirms that Elijah has indeed come, and was treated as they listed. The disciples understand: John the Baptist.

On the Epileptic Boy

The healing of the epileptic boy (Section 110) follows the Transfiguration immediately and deliberately in all three Synoptics — the descent from the mountain of glory straight into the failure of the nine disciples left below to cast out a demon. The contrast could not be more stark: Moses and Elijah above; faithless and perverse generation below. The father's anguished account — the boy falling into fire and water, the disciples' failure — evokes a helplessness that Jesus meets with a rebuke not of the father but of the generation in which they all stand.

His word to the disciples about their failure — "Because of your little faith" — and his saying about faith as a grain of mustard seed moving mountains are given only to the disciples privately. The same image of the mustard seed used in the parable (Section 86) of the kingdom's tiny beginning producing enormous growth is here applied to the tiny beginning of genuine faith producing what appears impossible. The connection is intentional: faith in the kingdom and faith as the means of kingdom power are facets of the same reality.

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Chapter Eleven

Matthew 17–18, Mark 9, Luke 9–10 — The Church Discourse; The Good Samaritan; Mary and Martha

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Part Ten: The Close of the Galilean Ministry and the Journey Toward Jerusalem

Section 111 — The Second Passion Prediction [Matt 17:22–23 / Mark 9:30–32 / Luke 9:43–45]

And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men; and they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised up.

And they were exceeding sorry. But they understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

Section 112 — The Temple Tax [Matt 17:24–27]

And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received the half-shekel came to Peter, and said, Doth not your teacher pay the half-shekel?

He saith, Yea. And when he came into the house, Jesus spake first to him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? from their sons, or from strangers?

And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said unto him, Therefore the sons are free. But, lest we cause them to stumble, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a shekel: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

Section 113 — Who Is Greatest? [Matt 18:1–5 / Mark 9:33–37 / Luke 9:46–48]

In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

Section 114 — He That Is Not Against Us Is for Us [Mark 9:38–41 / Luke 9:49–50]

John said unto him, Teacher, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followed not us.

But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Section 115 — Warnings Against Causing Stumbling [Matt 18:6–9 / Mark 9:42–48]

But whoso shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea.

Woe unto the world because of occasions of stumbling! for it must needs be that the occasions come; but woe to that man through whom the occasion cometh!

And if thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire.

Section 116 — The Parable of the Lost Sheep [Matt 18:10–14]

See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.

How think ye? if any man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and go unto the mountains, and seek that which goeth astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth over it more than over the ninety and

nine which have not gone astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

Section 117 — On Brotherly Correction and Forgiveness [Matt 18:15–22]

And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican.

Verily I say unto you, what things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Then came Peter and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?

Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.

Section 118 — The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant [Matt 18:23–35]

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, who would make a reckoning with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, that owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not wherewith to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, who owed him a hundred shillings: and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest. So his fellow-servant fell down and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay that which was owed.

So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were exceeding sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him unto him, and saith to him, Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldest not thou also have had mercy on thy fellow-servant, even as I had mercy on thee?

And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was owed. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

Section 119 — The Cost of Discipleship: Three Would-Be Followers [Matt 8:19–22 / Luke 9:57–62]

And as they went on the way, a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Teacher, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

And another of the disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus saith unto him, Follow me; and leave the dead to bury their own dead.

And another said, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. But Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Section 120 — The Face Set Toward Jerusalem; Samaritan Rejection [Luke 9:51–56]

And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he were going to Jerusalem.

And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?

But he turned, and rebuked them. And they went to another village.

Section 121 — The Sending of the Seventy [Luke 10:1–20]

Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come. And he said unto them,

The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest. Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes; and salute no man on the way.

And into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall turn to you again.

And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

But into whatsoever city ye shall enter, and they receive you not, go out into the streets thereof and say, Even the dust from your city, that cleaveth to our feet, we wipe off against you: howbeit know this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh.

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me.

And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name.

And he said unto them, I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you. Nevertheless in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Section 122 — The Lawyer's Question: The Great Commandment [Luke 10:25–28]

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Section 123 — The Parable of the Good Samaritan [Luke 10:29–37]

But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?

Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee.

Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?

And he said, He that showed mercy on him.

And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Section 124 — Mary and Martha [Luke 10:38–42]

Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word.

But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Eleven

On the Second Passion Prediction

The second passion prediction (Section 111) is deliberately less detailed than the first. Jesus says only that the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men, killed, and raised. The disciples' response — "they were exceeding sorry" and "it was concealed from them" — reflects the genuine incomprehension that the Synoptic Gospels present as characteristic of the disciples throughout the central section of the narrative. They know something terrible is being announced; they do not yet have the categories to understand it.

On the Temple Tax

The temple tax incident (Section 112) appears only in Matthew. The half-shekel (*didrachmon*) was the annual temple levy required of every adult Jewish male, based on Exodus 30:13. Jesus's response to Peter works by analogy: earthly kings do not tax their own sons, only foreigners; therefore the Son of God is free from the tax levied for his Father's house. But he pays it nonetheless — "lest we cause them to stumble" — from the coin found in the fish's mouth. The miracle is recounted with the utmost brevity; Matthew does not describe Peter finding the fish or the coin, only Jesus's instruction to do so. The detail of specifying the coin — a shekel, enough for two — is characteristically precise.

On the Discourse on the Church

Matthew 18 (Sections 113–118) is the fourth of Matthew's five great discourses and the only one explicitly about the internal life of the community of disciples — what Matthew uniquely calls the *ekklēsia*, the "church." It contains four major units: the call to become as little children (greatness through humility); warnings against causing little ones to stumble (millstone,

severed hand and eye); the parable of the lost sheep applied to the community's care for straying members; and the procedure for brotherly correction culminating in the unlimited forgiveness of the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant.

The procedure of Matthew 18:15–17 — private correction, then two or three witnesses, then the church — is the New Testament's most explicit governance instruction for the Christian community. It draws on Deuteronomy 19:15 (the two-or-three-witness rule). The saying about two or three gathered in Jesus's name with his presence in their midst (verse 20) has been one of the most widely quoted verses in Christian communal life for two thousand years.

On the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Section 118) is the culminating parable of Matthew 18 and one of the most structurally perfect in the Gospels. The contrast in debt is deliberately staggering: ten thousand talents was an almost incomprehensible sum — the equivalent of many millions of working days' wages, exceeding the annual revenues of entire kingdoms — while the hundred shillings owed by the fellow servant was a manageable debt. The first servant has been forgiven an impossible debt and immediately imprisons a fellow servant over a trivial one.

The parable makes the theological logic of forgiveness stark and inescapable: those who have received unlimited forgiveness from God have no standing to withhold finite forgiveness from human beings. The closing verse — "So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts" — connects directly back to the Lord's Prayer's sole conditional petition (Matthew 6:12): forgive us as we have forgiven.

On Setting the Face Toward Jerusalem

Luke 9:51 — "he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" — is one of the most significant transitional verses in the entire Synoptic narrative. The Greek *estērixen to prosōpon autou* (he set his face firmly) is language drawn from the prophetic tradition, particularly Ezekiel's prophetic resolve (Ezekiel 21:2) and the Servant of Isaiah (Isaiah 50:7: "I have set my face like a flint"). From this point forward in Luke's Gospel, the narrative is structured as a journey toward Jerusalem — a journey that occupies the entire central section of Luke's Gospel (9:51–19:44) and is unique to his narrative design. Matthew and Mark do not organize their central section around this journey motif.

The Samaritan rejection (Section 120) immediately tests the resolve of the disciples. James and John — whom Mark tells us Jesus had named Boanerges, "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17) — request permission to call down fire from heaven, echoing Elijah's act at Mount Carmel (2 Kings 1:10–12). Jesus rebukes them without explanation. The contrast between the disciples' instinct for divine destruction and Jesus's patient redirection to the next village captures in miniature the entire reorientation of messianic expectation that the journey to Jerusalem represents.

On the Sending of the Seventy

The sending of the seventy (Section 121) is unique to Luke and represents a commissioning larger than the Twelve — extending the mission beyond the apostolic core. The number seventy

(some manuscripts read seventy-two) may echo the seventy elders of Israel appointed by Moses (Numbers 11:16–17) or the seventy nations of Genesis 10, suggesting a mission that anticipates the universal scope of the gospel. The instructions parallel those given to the Twelve in Matthew 10 but with several distinctive elements: the prohibition against greeting anyone on the road (urgency of mission), the peace that rests on houses ready to receive it, and the eating of whatever is set before them — a rule that implicitly relaxes the dietary boundaries that would otherwise separate Jewish missionaries from Gentile hosts.

The report of the seventy — "even the demons are subject unto us in thy name" — prompts Jesus's most visionary saying in Luke: "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." The aorist tense (*ethearoun*, "I was beholding") suggests a heavenly vision of Satan's defeat already underway in the mission of the seventy, though the final victory lies ahead. The saying about authority to tread on serpents and scorpions echoes Psalm 91:13 and looks toward the ultimate subjection of all hostile powers.

On the Good Samaritan

The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Section 123) is unique to Luke and is the most culturally and ethically complex parable in the Synoptic Gospels. The lawyer's question — "Who is my neighbor?" — is a genuine legal question in Second Temple Judaism; the boundaries of the love-command of Leviticus 19:18 were contested, with some interpreters limiting "neighbor" to fellow Israelites. Jesus's answer demolishes the boundary question entirely by reframing it: the issue is not the identity of the neighbor (the victim) but the practice of being a neighbor (the Samaritan's action). He then makes the Samaritan — a figure of ethnic and religious contempt in Jewish society — the moral exemplar of the parable.

The priest and Levite pass by on the other side. The possible reasons — ritual defilement from a possibly dead body, concern for their Temple duties, simple fear of bandits — are not specified; their professional religious status makes their failure more pointed, not less. The Samaritan's acts are enumerated with deliberate detail: moved with compassion; came to him; bound up wounds; poured on oil and wine; set him on his own beast; brought him to an inn; took care of him; paid the innkeeper; promised to return and pay whatever more is needed. The generosity is not abstract; it is specific, costly, and complete.

On Mary and Martha

The Mary and Martha story (Section 124) is Luke's final pericope in this section of the harmony and is unique to his Gospel. It has generated more interpretive controversy than its brevity might suggest. The traditional reading contrasts the active life (Martha's service) with the contemplative life (Mary's sitting at Jesus's feet) in favor of the latter. A more careful reading notes that Martha's problem is not service itself but anxiety about service — she is "cumbered about much serving" and has lost the capacity to be present to the Guest she is serving. Mary, sitting at the Rabbi's feet in the posture of a disciple, has chosen "the good part which shall not be taken away from her."

The address — "Martha, Martha" — with its doubled name (paralleling "Simon, Simon" in Luke 22:31 and "Jerusalem, Jerusalem" in Matthew 23:37) carries a tone of tender rebuke rather than

harsh condemnation. Jesus does not disparage hospitality; he diagnoses anxiety. The story is placed by Luke immediately after the Good Samaritan — a parable about active mercy — perhaps to show that action and receptivity are both necessary and that the order matters: one must first receive before one can rightly give.

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Chapter Twelve

Matthew 19–20, Mark 10, Luke 12–18 — The Journey to Jerusalem; The Great Parables

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Part Eleven: The Journey to Jerusalem — Teaching on the Road

Section 125 — Watch and Be Ready: The Rich Fool [Luke 12:13–21]

And one out of the multitude said unto him, Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me.

But he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.

But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?

So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Section 126 — Fear Not, Little Flock [Luke 12:22–34]

And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. For the life is more than the food, and the body more than the raiment.

Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds!

And seek not ye what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

Yet seek ye his kingdom, and these things shall be added unto you.

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

Sell that which ye have, and give alms; make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Section 127 — Faithful and Unfaithful Servants [Luke 12:35–48]

Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him.

Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them.

But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.

And Peter said, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?

And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath.

But if that servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the unfaithful.

And that servant, who knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more.

Section 128 — On Divorce and Marriage [Matt 19:1–12 / Mark 10:1–12]

And he arose from thence and cometh into the borders of Judaea and beyond the Jordan: and multitudes come together unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

And there came unto him Pharisees, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and

shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh? So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

They say unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away?

He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.

The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry.

But he said unto them, Not all men can receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs, that were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, that were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, that made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

Section 129 — Jesus Blesses the Children [Matt 19:13–15 / Mark 10:13–16 / Luke 18:15–17]

And they were bringing unto him little children, that he should touch them: and the disciples rebuked them.

But when Jesus saw it, he was moved with indignation, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein.

And he took them in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

Section 130 — The Rich Young Ruler [Matt 19:16–30 / Mark 10:17–31 / Luke 18:18–30]

And as he was going forth into the way, one ran to him, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor thy father and mother.

And he said unto him, Teacher, all these things have I observed from my youth.

And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

But his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.

And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

And they were astonished exceedingly, saying unto him, Then who can be saved?

Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for all things are possible with God.

Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first.

Section 131 — The Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard [Matt 20:1–16]

For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that was a householder, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the laborers for a shilling a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing in the marketplace idle; and to them he said, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing; and he saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard.

And when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the laborers, and pay them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a shilling. And when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received every man a shilling. And when they received it, they murmured against the householder, saying, These last have spent one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.

But he answered and said to one of them, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a shilling? Take up that which is thine, and go thy way; it is my will to give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? or is thine eye evil, because I am good?

So the last shall be first, and the first last.

Section 132 — The Third Passion Prediction [Matt 20:17–19 / Mark 10:32–34 / Luke 18:31–34]

And they were on the way, going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them: and they were amazed; and they that followed were afraid.

And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them the things that were to happen unto him, saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him unto the Gentiles: and they shall mock him, and shall spit upon him, and shall scourge him, and shall kill him; and after three days he shall rise again.

And they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, and they perceived not the things that were said.

Section 133 — The Request of James and John [Matt 20:20–28 / Mark 10:35–45]

And there came near unto him James and John, the sons of Zebedee, saying unto him, Teacher, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee.

And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

And they said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy glory.

But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

And they said unto him, We are able.

And Jesus said unto them, The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit on my right hand or on my left hand is not mine to give: but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared.

And when the ten heard it, they began to be moved with indignation concerning James and John.

And Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you: but whosoever would become great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all. For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Section 134 — The Parable of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son [Luke 15:1–32]

Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

And he spake unto them this parable, saying, What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.

I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance.

Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost. Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

And he said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.

Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might be. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

But he was angry, and would not go in: and his father came out, and entreated him. But he answered and said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I have never transgressed a commandment of thine; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but when this thy son came, who hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf.

And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Section 135 — The Rich Man and Lazarus [Luke 16:19–31]

Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day: and a certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table; yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom: and the rich man also died, and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame.

But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.

And he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

But Abraham saith, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one go to them from the dead, they will repent.

And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, if one rise from the dead.

Section 136 — The Pharisee and the Tax Collector [Luke 18:9–14]

And he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought:

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men,

extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I get.

But the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote his breast, saying, God, be thou merciful to me a sinner.

I say unto you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Twelve

On the Journey Narrative

The section of Luke's Gospel from 9:51 to 19:44 is unique in the Synoptic tradition. Luke explicitly structures this material as a journey — Jesus moving steadily southward from Galilee toward Jerusalem — while Matthew and Mark present much of the same teaching in other contexts or not at all. The journey narrative contains more than thirty parables and discourses found only in Luke, making it the single richest source of distinctive Lukan material in the entire Gospel. Scholars have proposed various explanations for the origin of this material — Luke's own independent sources, a collection of Q-material not used by Matthew, or Luke's own arrangement of dispersed traditions — but its theological coherence is unmistakable: it is the sustained exposition of discipleship for a people who are following their Lord toward his death.

On the Rich Fool

The Parable of the Rich Fool (Section 125) is introduced by a request that Jesus does not grant: a man asks him to arbitrate an inheritance dispute. Jesus refuses the judicial role and instead addresses the desire behind the request — covetousness — with the parable. The rich man's monologue with his own soul is the most intimate portrait of self-deception in the Gospel parables: *"Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease."* The divine interruption — *"Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee"* — dissolves every calculation the man has made. The parable does not address what happens to the soul after death; it addresses the folly of treating material abundance as the foundation of life's security when the soul itself is held on loan.

On Fear Not, Little Flock

The saying "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Section 126) is one of the tenderest addresses to the disciples in Luke's Gospel. It connects the anxiety teaching of Matthew 6 (covered in Chapter Six of this harmony) with the specific situation of a small, vulnerable community whose Lord is walking toward Jerusalem to die. The kingdom is not something they must achieve or defend; it is a gift the Father *delights* to give. The connection between this assurance and the call to sell possessions and give alms is deliberate: anxiety about material security and clinging to possessions are the same spiritual problem — a failure to trust the Father's provision.

On the Teaching on Divorce

The Pharisees' question on divorce (Section 128) is one of the most legally precise exchanges in the Synoptic tradition. The Pharisaic schools of Shammai and Hillel disagreed sharply on the interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1 — Shammai limiting divorce to cases of sexual immorality, Hillel permitting it for virtually any reason a husband chose. Jesus bypasses both schools by returning to Genesis 1 and 2: God's original design was permanent one-flesh union. Moses's provision was an accommodation to the hardness of human hearts, not the divine ideal. The disciples' stunned response — "It is not expedient to marry" — suggests they heard Jesus as taking the stricter than strict position.

On Blessing the Children

The account of Jesus blessing the children (Section 129) is one of the most humanly vivid in the Synoptic tradition. Mark uses the word *eganaktēsen* — "was moved with indignation" — to describe Jesus's response to the disciples' rebuff of the children, one of the strongest expressions of displeasure toward the disciples in the Gospel narrative. He takes them in his arms — *enankalisamenos* — a word used only here and at Mark 9:36 in the New Testament, meaning to gather into one's embrace. The children are not merely illustrations of a teaching point; they are received as persons. The saying that follows — receiving the kingdom as a little child — is the necessary sequel: the child has no leverage, no achievement, no standing. It receives.

On the Rich Young Ruler

The account of the rich young ruler (Section 130) contains one of the most arresting details in the Synoptic Gospels, found only in Mark: *"And Jesus looking upon him loved him."* The love precedes the demand. The demand is not a general command to all disciples but a specific word to this specific person, whose wealth was the particular attachment that stood between him and following. The "camel through the eye of a needle" saying — likely a proverbial hyperbole for the impossible — produces the disciples' terrified question: *"Then who can be saved?"* The answer is not a softening of the requirement but an expansion of the frame: with men it is impossible; with God all things are possible.

On the Three Parables of the Lost

Luke 15 (Section 134) is the theological center of the entire Journey Narrative and contains what many regard as the greatest single parable in the Gospels: the Parable of the Lost Son, often called the Prodigal Son. It is preceded by the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin, which together establish the pattern — something lost, sought with costly effort, found with exceeding joy, celebrated with the community — before the third parable elaborates the same structure with persons rather than possessions.

The Lost Son parable alone would deserve extensive analysis. Three characters: the younger son who demands his inheritance (effectively wishing his father dead), wastes it in a far country, and returns in destitution; the father who sees him "yet afar off" and runs — an undignified act for a Middle Eastern patriarch — and falls on his neck and kisses him before a word is spoken; and the elder son who has been obedient all along and cannot comprehend why the returning prodigal should be celebrated.

The parable ends without resolution of the elder son's anger. The father's final word — *"This thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found"* — is both explanation and appeal. The Pharisees and scribes who murmured in verse 2 are the elder son; the parable ends with the father still outside the feast, still pleading with the one who stayed, still inviting the one who is angry to come in. The ending is open because the invitation is still open.

On the Rich Man and Lazarus

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Section 135) is the only parable in the Synoptic Gospels in which a character is given a personal name — Lazarus — which may indicate that Luke intends it as a historical account rather than a constructed parable, or may simply reflect the narrative convention of the parable form in this instance. The reversal at death is absolute and permanent: the great gulf fixed cannot be crossed. The parable's most devastating point comes at the end: the rich man's plea that Lazarus be sent to warn his five brothers is refused on the grounds that if they will not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded by someone rising from the dead. This is a statement about the sufficiency of Scripture for salvation and, implicitly, about the spiritual condition that prevents its reception.

On the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Section 136) is one of the most structurally precise in Luke. The Pharisee's prayer is addressed not to God but to himself — the Greek *pros heauton* ("with himself") can modify either his standing or his speaking, but the content of the prayer makes the self-direction unmistakable: it is a recitation of his own virtues in contrast to lesser men. The tax collector's prayer is seven words in Greek: *Ho theos, hilasthēti moi tō hamartōlō* — "God, be propitious to me the sinner." The definite article is significant: not *a* sinner but *the* sinner, as if he is the representative sinner, the type specimen of all who need mercy.

The verdict is unequivocal and unqualified: this man went down to his house justified, not the other. The word "justified" (*dedikaiōmenos*) is the same word used by Paul in his great theological argument in Romans and Galatians for the forensic act by which God declares a person righteous. Luke's use of the term here is not accidental.

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Chapter Thirteen

Matthew 20–22, Mark 10–12, Luke 18–20 — Jericho; The Triumphal Entry; The Temple Controversies

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Part Twelve: Jericho, the Entry, and the Temple

Section 137 — Blind Bartimaeus [Matt 20:29–34 / Mark 10:46–52 / Luke 18:35–43]

And they come to Jericho: and as he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the way side. And when he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

And many rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried out the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

And Jesus stood still, and said, Call ye him. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good cheer: rise, he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, sprang up, and came to Jesus.

And Jesus answered him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? And the blind man said unto him, Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.

And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And straightway he received his sight, and followed him in the way.

Section 138 — Zacchaeus the Tax Collector [Luke 19:1–10]

And he entered and was passing through Jericho. And behold, a man called by name Zacchaeus; and he was a chief publican, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the crowd, because he was little of stature. And he ran on before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner.

And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold.

And Jesus said unto him, To-day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Section 139 — The Parable of the Pounds [Luke 19:11–27]

And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear.

He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called ten servants of his, and gave them ten pounds, and said unto them, Trade ye herewith till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent an ambassage after him, saying, We will not that this man reign over us.

And it came to pass, when he was come back again, having received the kingdom, that he commanded these servants, unto whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know what they had gained by trading.

And the first came before him, saying, Lord, thy pound hath made ten pounds more. And he said unto him, Well done, thou good servant: because thou wast found faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

And the second came, saying, Thy pound, Lord, hath made five pounds. And he said unto him also, Be thou also over five cities.

And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that which thou layedst not

down, and reapest that which thou didst not sow. He saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I am an austere man, taking up that which I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow; then wherefore gavest thou not my money into the bank, and I at my coming should have required it with interest?

And he said unto them that stood by, Take away from him the pound, and give it unto him that hath the ten pounds. And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds. I say unto you, that unto every one that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him. But these mine enemies, that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

Section 140 — The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem [Matt 21:1–11 / Mark 11:1–11 / Luke 19:28–44]

And when they draw nigh unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go your way into the village that is over against you: and straightway as ye enter into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon no man ever yet sat; loose him, and bring him. And if any one say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye, The Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him back hither.

And they went away, and found a colt tied at the door without in the open street; and they loose him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And they said unto them even as Jesus had said: and they let them go.

And they bring the colt unto Jesus, and cast on him their garments; and he sat upon him.

And many spread their garments upon the way; and others branches, which they had cut from the fields. And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest.

And as he was now drawing nigh, even at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works which they had seen; saying,

Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

And some of the Pharisees from the multitude said unto him, Teacher, rebuke thy disciples.

And he answered and said, I tell you that, if these shall hold their peace, the stones will cry out.

And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, when thine enemies shall cast up a bank about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall dash thee to the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Section 141 — The Cleansing of the Temple [Matt 21:12–17 / Mark 11:15–19 / Luke 19:45–48]

And Jesus entered into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold the doves; and he saith unto them,

It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer: but ye make it a den of robbers.

And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple: and he healed them.

But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children that were crying in the temple and saying, Hosanna to the son of David; they were moved with indignation, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these are saying?

And Jesus saith unto them, Yea: did ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

And he left them, and went forth out of the city to Bethany, and lodged there.

Section 142 — The Cursing of the Fig Tree [Matt 21:18–22 / Mark 11:12–14, 20–25]

Now in the morning as he returned to the city, he hungered. And seeing a fig tree by the way side, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only; and he saith unto it, Let there be no fruit from thee henceforward for ever. And immediately the fig tree withered away.

And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How did the fig tree immediately wither away?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to the fig tree, but even if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

And whenever ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any one; that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

Section 143 — The Authority of Jesus Questioned [Matt 21:23–27 / Mark 11:27–33 / Luke 20:1–8]

And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?

And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, From men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet.

And they answered Jesus, and said, We know not.

He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Section 144 — The Parable of the Two Sons [Matt 21:28–32]

But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in the vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented himself, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.

Which of the two did the will of his father?

They say, The first.

Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him.

Section 145 — The Parable of the Wicked Tenants [Matt 21:33–46 / Mark 12:1–12 / Luke 20:9–19]

Hear another parable: There was a man that was a householder, who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge about it, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into another country.

And when the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, to receive his fruits. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them in like manner.

But afterward he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

But the husbandmen, when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance. And they took him, and cast him forth out of the vineyard, and killed him.

When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures,

The stone which the builders rejected, The same was made the head of the corner; This was from the Lord, And it is marvellous in our eyes?

Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Section 146 — The Parable of the Wedding Banquet [Matt 22:1–14]

And Jesus answered and spake again in parables unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, who made a marriage feast for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast: and they would not come.

Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have made ready my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage feast. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise: and the rest laid hold on his servants, and treated them shamefully, and killed them.

But the king was wroth; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.

Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast. And those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was filled with guests.

But when the king came in to behold the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding-garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless.

Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

For many are called, but few chosen.

Section 147 — Render unto Caesar [Matt 22:15–22 / Mark 12:13–17 / Luke 20:20–26]

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might ensnare him in his talk.

And they send to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a denarius.

And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?

They say unto him, Caesar's.

Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

And when they heard it, they marvelled, and left him, and went away.

Section 148 — The Sadducees' Question on the Resurrection [Matt 22:23–33 / Mark 12:18–27 / Luke 20:27–40]

On that day there came to him Sadducees, they that say there is no resurrection: and they asked him, saying, Teacher, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first married and deceased, and having no seed left his wife unto his brother; in like manner the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And after them all, the woman died. In the resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be of the seven?

But Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven.

But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

And when the multitudes heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.

Section 149 — The Great Commandment [Matt 22:34–40 / Mark 12:28–34]

But the Pharisees, when they heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, gathered themselves together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question, trying him: Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?

And he said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.

And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Teacher, thou hast well said that he is one; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is much more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.

Section 150 — David's Son and David's Lord [Matt 22:41–46 / Mark 12:35–37 / Luke 20:41–44]

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?

They say unto him, The son of David.

He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,

The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet?

If David then calleth him Lord, how is he his son?

And no one was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Thirteen

On Blind Bartimaeus

The healing of blind Bartimaeus (Section 137) is the last miracle in the Synoptic narrative before the Passion. Mark's account is the most detailed, preserving the man's personal name — Bar-Timaeus, son of Timaeus — and the vivid detail that he threw off his cloak before springing up to come to Jesus. The cloak was likely spread before him to collect alms; throwing it aside is an act of abandonment, a leaving behind of the only security a roadside beggar possessed. His address — *"Rabboni"* (a heightened form of Rabbi, meaning "my great Teacher") — appears only here and in John 20:16, where Mary Magdalene addresses the risen Jesus. Bartimaeus then follows Jesus "in the way" — the same Greek word used throughout Mark for the road to Jerusalem, carrying the double meaning of the literal road and the way of discipleship.

On Zacchaeus

The story of Zacchaeus (Section 138) is unique to Luke and is one of the most narratively memorable episodes in the Gospel tradition. Zacchaeus is not merely a tax collector (*telōnēs*) but a "chief tax collector" (*architelōnēs*) — a term found nowhere else in ancient Greek literature — suggesting he was the regional superintendent of the tax-farming system, wealthy precisely because he supervised the extortion of others. He is short; the crowd blocks his view; he runs ahead and climbs a sycamore fig tree. Jesus looks up, calls him by name, and invites himself to the man's house.

The crowd murmurs: *"He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner."* Zacchaeus's response — half his goods to the poor, fourfold restitution for any wrongful exaction — is either a present tense statement of current practice (he already does this) or a pledge of future action. Most interpreters take it as a genuine conversion response. Jesus's declaration — *"To-day is salvation come to this house"* — is the key word: salvation (*sōtēria*) has arrived not after Zacchaeus has performed penance but at the moment of his reception of Jesus. The restoration of Zacchaeus to the covenant community (*"he also is a son of Abraham"*) anticipates the gospel's reach to all who are lost: *"The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."*

On the Triumphal Entry

The Triumphal Entry (Section 140) is the most explicitly messianic public act of Jesus's ministry. The deliberate arrangement — the instruction to find the colt, the specific animal on which no man had yet sat (echoing Numbers 19:2 and Deuteronomy 21:3, which require untouched animals for sacred purposes), the fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9 ("Behold, thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and riding upon an ass") — is a carefully staged prophetic enactment. Jesus is not receiving an accidental acclamation; he is orchestrating a prophetic sign.

The crowd's cry of *"Hosanna"* — from the Hebrew *hoshi'ah na* (save now, Psalm 118:25) — has become a liturgical exclamation of praise rather than petition, but its original content is a prayer for deliverance. The Pharisees' discomfort — *"rebuke thy disciples"* — and Jesus's answer about the stones crying out establishes the necessity of the proclamation: the moment of divine visitation cannot pass in silence.

Luke alone records the weeping over Jerusalem (Section 140): Jesus looks at the city and weeps — the Greek *eklauses*, a word for audible weeping — and speaks the most tragic prophetic lament in the Gospel narrative, foreseeing the city's destruction with precision. The description of enemies casting up a bank (*charax*, a siege work) corresponds to the Roman siege works used by Titus in 70 C.E. with striking exactness.

On the Cleansing of the Temple

The Cleansing of the Temple (Section 141) is one of the few acts of physical force attributed to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels, and it represents the single most provocative public act of his Jerusalem ministry — more dangerous even than the Triumphal Entry, because it directly confronted the economic and religious interests of the high-priestly establishment. The Temple courts during Passover were the site of a vast commercial operation: money-changers converting Roman and foreign coinage into the Tyrian silver required for the Temple tax, dove-sellers providing animals for sacrifice. Jesus's action — overturning the tables, driving out the sellers — cites Isaiah 56:7 (*"My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations"*) against Jeremiah 7:11 (*"a den of robbers"*). The juxtaposition of the Temple's intended universality (Isaiah) and its actual corruption (Jeremiah) is the prophetic indictment.

On the Fig Tree

The cursing of the fig tree (Section 142) is the only destructive miracle in the Synoptic tradition and the most discussed in terms of its meaning. Mark places the cursing on the way to the Temple and the discovery of the withered tree the next morning — framing the Temple

cleansing between the two halves of the fig tree story in his characteristic intercalation technique. Matthew compresses the two events into a single morning. The fig tree in leaf but without fruit is a natural image for Israel's Temple establishment: the appearance of religious vitality without the fruit of genuine justice and mercy. The miracle is an acted parable of judgment, not an act of petulant frustration.

On the Temple Controversies

The Temple controversies of Sections 143–150 represent the most sustained theological debate in the Synoptic tradition. A sequence of adversaries — chief priests and elders, Pharisees and Herodians, Sadducees, a scribe — bring successive challenges, each of which Jesus answers and then turns back on the questioners. The pattern culminates in Section 150 with Jesus's own unanswerable question about Psalm 110:1: if David calls the Messiah "Lord," how can he be merely David's son? The question silences all opposition: *"No one was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions."*

The question about Caesar's coin (Section 147) is the most politically charged of the controversies. The trap is elegant: to say "pay tribute" conciliates Rome but alienates Jewish nationalists; to say "do not pay" is sedition against Rome. Jesus's answer — *"Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's"* — refuses both horns of the dilemma. His questioners have already implicitly conceded the answer by possessing the coin with Caesar's image: if you use Caesar's currency in Caesar's economy, you are already in the web of obligation. The deeper question — what belongs to God — is left for the questioners to answer for themselves.

The Great Commandment (Section 149) appears here in Matthew and Mark as an adversarial question, though the scribe who asks it in Mark is commended for his answer. In Luke (Section 122 of the preceding chapter), the same exchange introduces the Parable of the Good Samaritan. The two uses of the same tradition illustrate how the same teaching of Jesus could function in different narrative contexts without contradiction.

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Chapter Fourteen

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Part Thirteen: The Last Public Teaching and the Olivet Discourse

Section 151 — The Woes Against the Scribes and Pharisees [Matt 23:1–36 / Mark 12:38–40 / Luke 20:45–47]

Then spake Jesus to the multitudes and to his disciples, saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe: but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not.

Yea, they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger.

But all their works they do to be seen of men: for they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the chief place at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called of men, Rabbi.

But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even the Christ.

But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted.

But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves.

Woe unto you, ye blind guides, that say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools and blind: for which is greater, the gold, or the temple that hath sanctified the gold?

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these ye

ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone. Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the platter, that the outside thereof may become clean also.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets.

Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?

Section 152 — The Lament over Jerusalem [Matt 23:37–39]

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Section 153 — The Widow's Offering [Mark 12:41–44 / Luke 21:1–4]

And he sat down over against the treasury, and beheld how the multitude cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing.

And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury: for they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

Section 154 — The Prediction of the Temple's Destruction [Matt 24:1–2 / Mark 13:1–2 / Luke 21:5–6]

And Jesus went out from the temple, and was going on his way; and his disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple.

But he answered and said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Section 155 — Signs of the End: The Beginning of Birth Pangs [Matt 24:3–14 / Mark 13:3–13 / Luke 21:7–19]

And as he sat on the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man lead you astray. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray.

And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled: for these things must needs come to pass; but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places. But all these things are the beginning of travail.

Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all the nations for my name's sake. And then shall many stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray. And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold. But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations; and then shall the end come.

But before all these things, they shall lay their hands on you, and shall persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for my name's sake. It shall turn out unto you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate beforehand how to answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to withstand or to gainsay.

Section 156 — The Great Tribulation and the Coming of the Son of Man [Matt 24:15–31 / Mark 13:14–27 / Luke 21:20–28]

When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains: let him that is on the housetop not go down to take out things that are in his house: and let him that is in the field not return back to take his cloak.

But woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on a sabbath: for then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be.

And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand. Then let them that are in Judaea flee unto the mountains; and let them that are in the midst of her depart out; and let not them that are in the country enter therein. For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh.

Section 157 — The Parable of the Fig Tree [Matt 24:32–35 / Mark 13:28–31 / Luke 21:29–33]

Now from the fig tree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh; even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors.

Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Section 158 — No One Knows the Hour [Matt 24:36–44 / Mark 13:32–37]

But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only.

And as were the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of man. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall be the coming of the Son of man.

Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left.

Watch therefore: for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have watched,

and would not have suffered his house to be broken through. Therefore be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Section 159 — The Parable of the Ten Virgins [Matt 25:1–13]

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

For the foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

Now while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out.

But the wise answered and said, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage feast: and the door was shut.

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.

Section 160 — The Parable of the Talents [Matt 25:14–30]

For it is as when a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability; and he went on his journey.

Straightway he that received the five talents went and traded with them, and made other five talents. In like manner he also that received the two gained other two. But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

Now after a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them. And he that received the five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: lo, I have gained other five talents.

His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

And he also that received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: lo, I have gained other two talents. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

And he also that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering where thou didst not scatter; and I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast thine own.

But his lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I did not scatter; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received back mine own with interest.

Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath the ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away.

And cast ye out the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

Section 161 — The Sheep and the Goats [Matt 25:31–46]

But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and fed thee? or athirst, and gave thee drink? And when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? And when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Then shall they also answer, saying, Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me.

And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Fourteen

On the Seven Woes

Matthew 23 (Section 151) contains the most sustained and unsparing prophetic indictment in the Synoptic Gospels — seven formal woes (*ouai*, the Hebrew *hoy* of prophetic denunciation) directed at the scribes and Pharisees in the Temple precincts. The passage is unique to Matthew in its full form, though Mark and Luke contain shorter versions of the scribal critique (Section 151). The woes are not a blanket condemnation of Pharisaism as such — Jesus explicitly acknowledges that the scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses's seat and that their teaching should be heeded (23:2–3). The indictment is of the gap between teaching and practice, between the outward performance of religion and its inward reality.

The most famous images in the passage — phylacteries broadened for show, the strain of the gnat and the swallow of the camel, the whitened sepulchres beautiful on the outside and full of dead men's bones — are among the most vivid metaphors in the Gospel tradition. Each woe follows the same pattern: the charge of hypocrisy, the specific practice criticized, and the exposure of the interior reality beneath the exterior performance. The cumulative effect is not contempt for religion but a devastating analysis of what religion becomes when it loses its interior life and becomes a social performance.

The closing address — *"Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?"* — is the harshest language in the Synoptic Gospels, and it is immediately followed by one of the most heartbroken: the lament over Jerusalem.

On the Lament Over Jerusalem

The lament over Jerusalem (Section 152) is the emotional counterweight to the woes that precede it. The shift from denunciation to lamentation in a single breath — from *"how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?"* to *"how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings"* — is one of the most dramatic tonal transitions in the Gospel tradition. The image of the hen gathering her chicks is an image of maternal, self-giving love: the hen spreads her wings to shelter her brood at cost to herself.

"And ye would not." The four Greek words — *kai ouk ēthelήσατε* — are the theological center of the passage. The refusal is not God's; it is Jerusalem's. The city that kills prophets has been sought; it has refused to be found. The desolation that follows is not punishment imposed from outside but the natural consequence of the city's own rejection of its moment of divine visitation — the phrase Jesus used when weeping over the city at the Triumphal Entry (Luke 19:44).

On the Widow's Offering

The widow's two mites (Section 153) appear between the woes against the scribes and the Olivet Discourse in both Mark and Luke, and the placement is significant. The scribes have just been condemned for "devouring widows' houses" (Mark 12:40). Now Jesus sits and watches the treasury: the rich cast in large amounts from their abundance; a destitute widow casts in two lepta — the smallest coins in circulation, together worth a tiny fraction of a day's wage. His

verdict inverts every economic calculation: she has given more than all of them, because she has given all that she had to live on.

The saying does not prescribe this as a general rule of giving; it is an observation about the nature of sacrifice. The rich man's large gift costs him nothing of his security; the widow's tiny gift costs her everything. The measure of giving, Jesus implies, is not the amount given but the proportion of one's life that the gift represents.

On the Olivet Discourse

The Olivet Discourse (Sections 155–158) is the most complex and most debated passage in the Synoptic Gospels. All three Synoptics present it as a private discourse delivered to the disciples on the Mount of Olives after leaving the Temple, prompted by their admiration of the Temple buildings and Jesus's prediction of their total destruction. The discourse addresses two questions that the disciples conflate into one: when will the Temple be destroyed? and what will be the sign of Jesus's return and the end of the age?

The scholarly debate centers on whether Jesus's answers address one event (the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.) or two (70 C.E. and a future final coming), or whether the discourse deliberately interweaves the near and far horizons as a single prophetic vision in the manner of Old Testament prophecy. Three major interpretive positions have been held: preterism (all fulfilled in 70 C.E.), futurism (the great tribulation language refers to a still-future event), and the dual-fulfillment view in which the destruction of Jerusalem is a type and anticipation of the final consummation.

Several details in the discourse point specifically to the events of 70 C.E. with striking precision: the armies surrounding Jerusalem (Luke 21:20), the exhortation to flee to the mountains (fulfilled when the Jerusalem church fled to Pella), the warning not to pray that flight be "on a sabbath" (a uniquely Jewish concern). Other details — the cosmic signs, the gathering of the elect from the four winds, the Son of Man coming on the clouds — exceed anything that could be fulfilled in the historical events of 70 C.E. and point to a horizon beyond them.

What is not in dispute is Jesus's statement in Section 158: *"But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only."* This absolute qualification — unique among Jesus's teachings in its ascription of ignorance to the Son himself — establishes that the Olivet Discourse is not a date-setting document but a call to watchfulness precisely because the time is unknown.

On the Three Eschatological Parables

Matthew 25 contains three parables of eschatological readiness that bring the Olivet Discourse to its conclusion and the entire pre-Passion teaching ministry to a close.

The Ten Virgins (Section 159) turns on the distinction between wisdom and foolishness in preparation. All ten sleep — the wise and the foolish alike — and all ten are awakened by the same midnight cry. The difference is not wakefulness but the preparation made before sleeping: oil that cannot be borrowed or shared at the last minute. The door shuts and does not reopen. *"I know you not"* is the same verdict given in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7:23) to those whose religious works had no relationship behind them.

The Talents (Section 160) parallels the Parable of the Pounds in Luke 19 (Section 139) but with significant differences in detail. The master distributes different amounts to different servants according to their ability — five talents, two, one — and expects proportional return. The condemnation of the one-talent servant is not for losing the talent but for burying it in fear — for treating the master's gift as a burden rather than an opportunity. The remedy he proposes at his own judgment — the bank, with interest — is modest but was at least possible; his failure was not inability but unwillingness rooted in a distorted view of his master's character.

The Sheep and the Goats (Section 161) closes the entire pre-Passion teaching ministry with the most universally applied and morally concrete of all the judgment parables. The criterion of judgment is not doctrinal precision, ecclesiastical membership, or religious performance but the response to concrete human need: food, water, hospitality, clothing, care for the sick, visitation of prisoners. The identification of the Son of Man with the least of his brothers — *"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me"* — is the most radical identification of the divine with the vulnerable in the Gospel tradition. Both groups — the sheep and the goats — are equally surprised by the verdict; neither knew that in their response to human need they were responding to or rejecting Jesus himself.

The parable ends with two destinations: eternal life and eternal punishment. The Greek *aionios* (eternal, age-lasting) modifies both, underscoring the parallel and permanent character of both outcomes. Matthew places this as the last word of Jesus's public teaching ministry. It is a fitting end: the entire Sermon on the Mount's ethics — love of enemy, mercy, peacemaking, care for the poor — here meets its ultimate ground and its ultimate consequence.

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Part Fourteen: The Passion of Our Lord

Section 162 — The Plot to Kill Jesus [Matt 26:1–5 / Mark 14:1–2 / Luke 22:1–2]

And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these words, he said unto his disciples, Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified.

Then were gathered together the chief priests, and the elders of the people, unto the court of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas; and they took counsel together that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him.

But they said, Not during the feast, lest a tumult arise among the people.

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might put him to death; for they feared the people.

Section 163 — The Anointing at Bethany [Matt 26:6–13 / Mark 14:3–9]

Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto him a woman having an alabaster cruse of exceeding precious ointment, and she poured it upon his head as he sat at meat.

But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

But Jesus perceiving it said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always. For in that she poured this ointment upon my body, she did it to prepare me for burial.

Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

Section 164 — Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus [Matt 26:14–16 / Mark 14:10–11 / Luke 22:3–6]

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said, What are ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you?

And they weighed unto him thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to deliver him unto them.

And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went away, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might deliver him unto them. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he consented, and sought opportunity to deliver him unto them apart from the multitude.

Section 165 — The Preparation of the Passover [Matt 26:17–19 / Mark 14:12–16 / Luke 22:7–13]

Now on the first day of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Where wilt thou that we make ready for thee to eat the passover?

And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and make ready for us the passover, that we may eat.

And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we make ready?

And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house whereinto he goeth. And ye shall say unto the master of the house, The Teacher saith unto thee, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

Section 166 — The Passover Supper Begins; The Betrayer Identified [Matt 26:20–25 / Mark 14:17–21 / Luke 22:14–18]

And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I shall not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

And he received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

And as they were eating, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began to say unto him every one, Is it I, Lord?

And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had not been born.

And Judas, who betrayed him, answered and said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith unto him, Thou hast said.

Section 167 — The Institution of the Lord's Supper [Matt 26:26–29 / Mark 14:22–25 / Luke 22:19–20]

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins.

And he said unto them, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you.

But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

Section 168 — The Dispute About Greatness at the Table [Luke 22:24–30]

And there arose also a contention among them, which of them was accounted to be greatest.

And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them; and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

For which is greater, one that sitteth at meat, or one that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am in the midst of you as he that serveth.

But ye are they that have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Section 169 — Satan's Request and Peter's Denial Foretold [Matt 26:31–35 / Mark 14:27–31 / Luke 22:31–34]

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not; and do thou, when once thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren.

And he said unto him, Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death.

And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, until thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended in me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.

But Peter answered and said unto him, If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended.

Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Peter saith unto him, Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. And likewise also said all the disciples.

Section 170 — The Two Swords [Luke 22:35–38]

And he said unto them, When I sent you forth without purse, and wallet, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing.

And he said unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a wallet; and he that hath none, let him sell his cloak, and buy a sword. For I say unto you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in me, And he was reckoned with transgressors: for that which concerneth me hath fulfilment.

And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

Section 171 — The Agony in Gethsemane [Matt 26:36–46 / Mark 14:32–42 / Luke 22:39–46]

And they went out unto the mount of Olives.

And he came out, and went, as his custom was, unto the mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed him.

And when they were come unto a place called Gethsemane, he saith unto his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and sore troubled. Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: abide ye here, and watch with me.

And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Again a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done.

And he came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. And he left them again, and went away, and prayed a third time, saying again the same words.

Then cometh he to the disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that betrayeth me.

Section 172 — The Arrest of Jesus [Matt 26:47–56 / Mark 14:43–52 / Luke 22:47–53]

And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is he: take him. And straightway he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Rabbi; and kissed him.

And Jesus said unto him, Friend, do that for which thou art come.

Then they came and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

And behold, one of them that were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and smote the servant of the high priest, and struck off his ear.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels? How then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

And he touched his ear, and healed him.

In that hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a robber with swords and staves to seize me? I sat daily in the temple teaching, and ye took me not. But all this is come to pass, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples left him, and fled.

Section 173 — Jesus Before the High Priest; Peter's Denial [Matt 26:57–75 / Mark 14:53–72 / Luke 22:54–71]

And they that had taken Jesus led him away to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together.

But Peter followed him afar off, unto the court of the high priest, and entered in, and sat with the officers, to see the end.

Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put him to death; and they found it not, though many false witnesses came. But afterward came two, and said, This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

And the high priest stood up, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace.

And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God.

Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?

They answered and said, He is worthy of death. Then did they spit in his face and buffet him: and some smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ: who is he that struck thee?

Now Peter was sitting without in the court: and a maid came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and saith unto them that were there, This man also was with Jesus the Nazarene. And again he denied with an oath, I know not the man.

And after a little while they that stood by came and said to Peter, Of a truth thou also art one of them; for thy speech maketh thee known. Then began he to curse and to swear, I know not the man.

And straightway the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Fifteen

On the Passion Narrative as a Unified Account

No section of the Gospel tradition has been more carefully studied, more precisely compared across the four Gospels, or more extensively analyzed by scholars than the Passion narrative. The three Synoptics agree on the broad sequence and on numerous specific details to a degree that exceeds their agreement anywhere else in the narrative. This closeness of agreement has led scholars from Dibelius to Jeremias to Bultmann to propose that the Passion narrative was the earliest continuous written narrative about Jesus — that it circulated as a unified account before the other Gospel traditions were assembled. Whether or not that reconstruction is correct, the result is a narrative of extraordinary coherence and precision.

On the Anointing at Bethany

The anointing at Bethany (Section 163) occurs in Matthew and Mark before the Passover supper, distinct from the Lukan anointing by the sinful woman at Simon the Pharisee's house covered in Chapter Eight. John's Gospel places a similar anointing at the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus six days before the Passover and identifies the woman as Mary of Bethany. Matthew and Mark identify the host as Simon the leper. The relationship among these accounts is one of the classic problems of Gospel harmonization: some harmonists treat them as three separate events, others as two, others as one. This harmony treats the Bethany anointing of Matthew 26 and Mark 14 as distinct from the earlier Lukan anointing.

What is theologically decisive in this anointing is Jesus's interpretation: she has anointed him for burial. He is not merely accepting an act of devotion; he is reading its prophetic significance. The extravagance that scandalized the disciples — ointment worth a year's wages, poured out in a moment — is precisely the measure of its appropriateness. And the promise Jesus makes: wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. In the providence of that promise, it has been.

On the Thirty Pieces of Silver

The price of Judas's betrayal — thirty pieces of silver (Section 164) — is the price set in Exodus 21:32 as compensation for a slave gored by an ox. It is a slave's price, and Matthew (who alone gives the specific amount) clearly has Zechariah 11:12–13 in mind: *"So they weighed for my hire thirty pieces of silver. And Jehovah said unto me, Cast it unto the potter, the goodly price that I was prized at by them."* The irony is devastating: the price the chief priests set on the Lord of glory is the legal compensation for a dead slave.

Luke's note that "Satan entered into Judas" (Section 164) does not exempt Judas from moral responsibility — Luke also records that Judas "consented" and "sought opportunity." The dual causation — satanic agency and human agency — is characteristic of the Passion narrative's understanding of the events: they are simultaneously the work of human wickedness and the fulfillment of divine purpose.

On the Institution of the Lord's Supper

The institution of the Lord's Supper (Section 167) is the central act of the Passion narrative and one of the most theologically analyzed passages in the entire New Testament. The harmony presents both Matthew/Mark's account and Luke's, which contain slightly different formulations. The key elements are constant: the bread identified with his body given; the cup identified with the new covenant in his blood poured out; the command to do this in remembrance of him (Luke alone, and paralleled in Paul's account at 1 Corinthians 11:24–25).

The phrase "new covenant in my blood" (*kainē diathēkē en tō haimati mou*) is the direct echo of Jeremiah 31:31–34, where God promises a new covenant written on the heart rather than on stone. The blood of the covenant recalls Exodus 24:8, where Moses sprinkled the blood of sacrificed animals on the people saying, "Behold the blood of the covenant." Jesus's words place his own death within this covenant-ratification framework: his blood is the covenant blood, his death the covenant-making act that the old sacrificial system had prefigured.

Matthew's account alone adds the phrase "unto remission of sins" (*eis aphesin hamartiōn*) with reference to the blood — the only time in the Synoptic institution narratives that the cup is directly connected to forgiveness. This phrase, drawing on Isaiah 53:12 (the Servant who "bore the sin of many"), makes the atoning significance of the death explicit in the liturgical act.

On the Agony in Gethsemane

The Gethsemane narrative (Section 171) is the most psychologically intense scene in the Gospel tradition. Three details deserve particular attention. First, the emotional language: Matthew uses *lupesthai kai adēmonein* — to be sorrowful and sore troubled, the latter word (*adēmonein*) indicating a state of anxiety bordering on distress and disorientation. Jesus says to the inner three: *"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"* — a phrase that echoes Psalm 42:5–6 and 43:5 but intensifies them beyond the psalmist's expression. Second, the prayer: three times he prays the same request, moving from "if it be possible, let this cup pass away" to "if this cannot pass away except I drink it, thy will be done." The movement within the prayer is itself a spiritual journey: from the human will expressing its natural recoil from suffering to the human will surrendering to the Father's will. Third, the disciples sleep: three times Jesus returns to find them sleeping, the same disciples who argued about greatness at the table and who swore they would never be offended. The gap between their protestations and their performance is already evident before the arrest.

Luke alone records the appearance of an angel strengthening him and the sweat becoming "as it were great drops of blood" (*thromboi haimatos*, literally clots of blood) — a phenomenon known in extreme psychological stress called hematidrosis, in which subcutaneous capillaries rupture under pressure. Luke, the physician, is the only evangelist to record this detail.

On Peter's Denial

Peter's denial (Section 173) is the most carefully narrated human failure in the Gospel tradition. The sequence is precise: the first denial to the servant girl in the gateway; the second to another servant girl as he moves toward the porch; the third to the bystanders who identify him by his Galilean accent. Between the second and third denial Peter takes an oath; between the second and the third he explicitly curses — the escalation from denial to sworn denial to cursing marks the progressive deterioration of a man trying to distance himself from the person he most deeply belongs to.

The cock crows. Luke adds a detail found in no other Gospel: "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter." This single sentence — if Jesus was in the courtyard within Peter's sight — presupposes that the trial before the high priest was partially conducted in the open court, visible to those below. Peter remembers the word. He goes out. He weeps bitterly. The Greek *eklasen pikrōs* — he wept bitterly — is the same verb used of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, applied now to the man who will become the first witness of the resurrection and the leader of the earliest church. The weeping is not the end of Peter; it is the beginning of his restoration.

On the Jewish Trial

The night trial before Caiaphas (Section 173) is historically problematic on several points: Jewish law prohibited capital trials at night, and the Mishnah's regulations for Sanhedrin trials were, if

observed, far more protective of defendants than the Gospel accounts suggest. Scholars have proposed various resolutions: that the Mishnaic regulations were not yet in force in the first century, that what is described was a preliminary hearing rather than a formal trial, or that the urgency of the situation led the authorities to violate their own procedures. What the Synoptics present is not a formal legal proceeding but an attempt to produce a charge sufficient to bring before Pilate.

The decisive exchange is between the high priest and Jesus. The high priest adjures Jesus by the living God to say whether he is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus replies: *"Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."* The response combines Psalm 110:1 (sitting at the right hand) with Daniel 7:13 (coming on the clouds) — the two texts Jesus has consistently applied to himself throughout the Jerusalem controversies. The high priest tears his garments: the charge is blasphemy. The penalty is death.

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Chapter Sixteen

Matthew 27–28, Mark 15–16, Luke 23–24 — The Trial; The Crucifixion; The Resurrection

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Part Fifteen: The Trial, Crucifixion, Death, and Resurrection

Section 174 — Judas's Remorse and Death [Matt 27:1–10]

Now when morning was come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: and they bound him, and led him away, and delivered him up to Pilate the governor.

Then Judas, who betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? see thou to it.

And he cast down the pieces of silver into the sanctuary, and departed; and he went away and hanged himself.

And the chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, the field of blood, unto this day. Then

was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was priced, whom certain of the children of Israel did price; and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

Section 175 — Jesus Before Pilate [Matt 27:11–26 / Mark 15:1–15 / Luke 23:1–25]

And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he gave him no answer, not even to one word: insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

And the whole company of them rose up, and brought him before Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ a king.

Now at the feast the governor was wont to release unto the multitude one prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas. When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?

For he knew that for envy they had delivered him up. And while he was sitting on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

But the governor answered and said unto them, Which of the two will ye that I release unto you? And they said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What then shall I do unto Jesus who is called Christ? They all say, Let him be crucified. And he said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified.

So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man; see ye to it. And all the people answered and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

Then released he unto them Barabbas; but Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified.

Section 176 — The Mocking by the Soldiers [Matt 27:27–31 / Mark 15:16–20]

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium, and gathered unto him the whole band. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And they platted a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before

him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spat upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head.

And when they had mocked him, they took off from him the robe, and put on him his garments, and led him away to crucify him.

Section 177 — The Way to the Cross [Matt 27:32 / Mark 15:21 / Luke 23:26–32]

And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; him they compelled to go with them, that he might bear his cross.

And there followed him a great multitude of the people, and of women who bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the breasts that never gave suck.

For if they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

And there were also two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

Section 178 — The Crucifixion [Matt 27:33–44 / Mark 15:22–32 / Luke 23:33–43]

And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull, they offered him wine to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted it, he would not drink.

And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments among them, casting lots; and they sat and watched him there.

And they set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Then were there two robbers crucified with him, one on the right hand, and one on the left.

And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross.

In like manner also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. He trusted on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

And one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us.

But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but

this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said, Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.

And he said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.

And Jesus said, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Section 179 — The Death of Jesus [Matt 27:45–56 / Mark 15:33–41 / Luke 23:44–49]

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

And some of them that stood there, when they heard it, said, This man calleth Elijah. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. And the rest said, Let be; let us see whether Elijah cometh to save him.

And Jesus cried again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit.

And behold, the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake; and the rocks were rent; and the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints that had fallen asleep were raised; and coming forth out of the tombs after his resurrection they entered into the holy city and appeared unto many.

Now the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, when they saw the earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

And it was now about the sixth hour, and a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, the sun's light failing; and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this, he gave up the ghost.

And all the multitudes that came together to this sight, when they beheld the things that were done, returned smiting their breasts.

And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed with him from Galilee, stood afar off, seeing these things.

Section 180 — The Burial [Matt 27:57–66 / Mark 15:42–47 / Luke 23:50–56]

And when even was come, there came a rich man from Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus's disciple: he went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to be given up.

And Joseph took the body, and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed.

And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

And the women, who had come with him out of Galilee, followed after, and beheld the tomb, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. And on the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

Now on the next day, that is, the day after the Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest haply his disciples come and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: and the last error will be worse than the first.

Pilate said unto them, Ye have a guard: go, make it as sure as ye can. And they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, the guard being with them.

Section 181 — The Empty Tomb [Matt 28:1–8 / Mark 16:1–8 / Luke 24:1–12]

Now late on the sabbath day, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint him.

And very early on the first day of the week, they come to the tomb when the sun was risen. And they were saying among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the tomb?

And looking up, they see that the stone is rolled back: for it was exceeding great.

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was as lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the watchers did quake, and became as dead men.

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

And go quickly, and tell his disciples, He is risen from the dead; and lo, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him.

And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring his disciples word.

But Peter arose, and ran unto the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths by themselves; and he departed to his home, wondering at that which was come to pass.

Section 182 — The Road to Emmaus [Luke 24:13–35]

And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was threescore furlongs from Jerusalem. And they communed with each other of all these things which had happened.

And it came to pass, while they communed and questioned together, that Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

And he said unto them, What communications are these that ye have one with another, as ye walk? And they stood still, looking sad.

And one of them, named Cleopas, answering said unto him, Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days?

And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we hoped that it was he who should redeem Israel. Yea and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass.

And moreover certain women of our company amazed us, having been early at the tomb; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.

And he said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?

And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they were going: and he made as though he would go further. And they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent.

And he went in to abide with them. And it came to pass, when he had sat down with them to meat, he took the bread and blessed; and breaking it he gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

And they said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way, while he opened to us the scriptures?

And they rose up that very hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

And they rehearsed the things that happened in the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of the bread.

Section 183 — Jesus Appears to the Eleven [Matt 28:16–17 / Luke 24:36–49]

And as they spake these things, he himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they beheld a spirit.

And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and wherefore do questionings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having.

And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it, and ate before them.

And he said unto them, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me.

Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things.

And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.

Section 184 — The Report of the Guard; the Women Meet the Risen Lord [Matt 28:9–15]

And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him.

Then Jesus saith unto them, Fear not: go tell my brethren that they depart into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city, and told the chief priests all the things that were come to pass. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave much money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and rid you of care. And they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews, and continueth until this day.

Section 185 — The Great Commission [Matt 28:18–20 / Mark 16:15–18 / Luke 24:50–53]

And the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.

And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.

And he led them out until they were over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Sixteen

On Pilate and the Trial Before Rome

The trial before Pilate (Section 175) is the most politically complex scene in the Passion narrative. Pontius Pilate — prefect of Judaea from 26 to 36 C.E. — is presented by all three Synoptics as a man who privately believes Jesus to be innocent and yet yields to the pressure of the crowd and the chief priests. This portrait has been both defended and challenged as historical. Josephus and Philo both describe Pilate as a man of considerable brutality and not ordinarily susceptible to public pressure; the Gospel picture of a Pilate who washes his hands and defers to the crowd may reflect the specific political dynamics of a Passover season, when the potential for Jewish revolt made the Roman governor unusually sensitive to maintaining public order.

The detail of Pilate's wife's dream (Section 175, Matthew alone) — *"Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him"* — is one of the most dramatically compelling details in the Passion narrative. Dreams as divine communications were taken seriously in both Jewish and Greco-Roman culture. Matthew's inclusion of the detail underscores the irony: the Gentile woman recognizes the righteousness of Jesus through a dream, while the religious establishment of Israel presses for his death in broad daylight.

The handwashing scene (Matthew alone) draws on the Jewish ritual of Deuteronomy 21:6–9, in which elders washed their hands over an unresolved murder to disclaim responsibility. Pilate's adoption of the Jewish rite before a Jewish crowd is an act of theater that acknowledges his own guilt while attempting to deflect it. His declaration — *"I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man"* — echoes the language of innocence and blood that runs through the entire Passion: innocent blood (Matthew 27:4), the blood of the covenant (Matthew 26:28), his blood on us and on our children (Matthew 27:25).

On the Crucifixion

The crucifixion narrative (Section 178) is the most restrained and most powerful account of violent death in ancient literature. The Synoptic evangelists do not describe the physical process of crucifixion in any graphic detail — the word "crucified" appears without elaboration. What they record instead are the surrounding circumstances: the soldiers dividing his garments and casting lots (fulfilling Psalm 22:18), the title over his head, the two robbers on either side, the passersby and the authorities mocking, the challenge to come down from the cross.

Luke alone records two unique elements at the cross: Jesus's prayer — *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* — and the dialogue with the penitent thief. The prayer of forgiveness, given while the soldiers are in the act of nailing him to the cross, is the most concentrated expression in the Gospel tradition of the ethic Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount: love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you. He practices at the cross what he preached on the mountain.

The dying thief's request — *"Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom"* — and Jesus's response — *"Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise"* — is among the most theologically significant exchanges in the Passion narrative. The thief confesses Jesus's innocence, acknowledges his own guilt, and makes the most minimal possible profession of faith: a request to be remembered. The response is immediate, unconditional, and extravagant: not "I will remember you eventually" but "today, with me, in Paradise."

On the Death of Jesus

The darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour (Section 179) — noon to three in the afternoon — covers the three hours of Jesus's death with a sign that all three Synoptics record without explanation. Whether a natural phenomenon coinciding with the crucifixion or a supernatural sign is a question the evangelists do not address; they record it as fact.

The cry of dereliction — *"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"* — is the most theologically profound utterance from the cross and one of the most discussed texts in the New Testament. It is a quotation of Psalm 22:1 in Aramaic (with a Hebrew form of "Eli"), a psalm that begins in abandonment and ends in praise. Jesus, in the moment of maximum suffering, prays the Psalter — the prayer book of Israel — and prays its most anguished prayer. The theological significance is immense: the one who has called God "Father" throughout his ministry now cries "My God, my God" in the language of the forsaken. Whatever the metaphysical content of the cry, the experience it expresses is the experience of total abandonment — the full weight of human estrangement from God concentrated in a single moment.

Luke substitutes a different final word: *"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"* — a quotation of Psalm 31:5. Where Matthew and Mark record the cry of dereliction, Luke records the prayer of trust. The two are not contradictory but represent different moments of the dying — the darkness and the surrender — recorded by different evangelists for different theological purposes.

The rending of the Temple veil — from top to bottom — is recorded by all three Synoptics and is interpreted in the epistle to the Hebrews as the opening of access to the presence of God

(Hebrews 10:19–20). The veil separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, the place of the divine presence entered only by the high priest once a year on the Day of Atonement. Its tearing from top to bottom (from God's side downward, the evangelists imply) is the enacted answer to the theological question of the cross: what has been accomplished?

The centurion's confession — *"Truly this was the Son of God"* — comes from the officer commanding the execution. It is the Passion narrative's climax of ironic confession: the first full human confession of Jesus's divine identity in Mark's Gospel (1:1) is thus echoed at the cross by the officer of the occupying empire who supervised his death.

On the Burial

The burial narrative (Section 180) introduces Joseph of Arimathaea — a rich man and disciple of Jesus who had not consented to the council's decision (Luke 23:51) — whose offer to provide his own tomb makes possible the resurrection narrative that follows. The detail that the tomb was new (Matthew) and that no man had yet lain in it (Luke) is significant for the apologetic purpose of the resurrection account: the tomb was unambiguously identifiable as the specific place where Jesus had been laid.

The posting of the guard (Matthew alone, Section 180) is narratively important because it makes the disciples' alleged theft of the body — the chief counter-explanation offered to the resurrection from that day to this — implausible on its own terms: the authorities who set the guard were themselves protecting against exactly that scenario.

On the Resurrection

The resurrection narrative (Sections 181–185) is the most carefully harmonized section of the entire Synoptic tradition, and also the most obviously divergent in detail. The number of women, the number of angels, the precise words spoken at the tomb, and the sequence of appearances all vary across the three accounts. Matthew records one angel; Mark records a young man in white; Luke records two men in dazzling apparel. Matthew records that the women departed with fear and great joy; Mark records that they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid.

These divergences have been analyzed exhaustively by scholars from every confessional position. The divergences are precisely the kind that would be expected from multiple independent witnesses to the same event: they agree on the core facts (the tomb was empty; the body was not there; the women were told he had risen; he appeared to his disciples) while differing on peripheral details (how many angels? what precisely did they say?). Fabricated accounts of the same event tend to agree far more closely in detail; independent witness accounts tend to agree on the central facts while diverging on the details.

On the Road to Emmaus

The Emmaus appearance (Section 182) is unique to Luke and is the most fully narrated resurrection appearance in the Synoptic tradition. Two disciples — one named Cleopas, one unnamed — walk the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus in the late afternoon of the first day of the week. The risen Jesus joins them incognito and leads them through "Moses and all the

prophets" in an exposition of the scriptural necessity of the Messiah's suffering — the longest single teaching of the risen Jesus recorded in any Gospel.

Their recognition comes not in the scriptural exposition but in the breaking of bread — the same fourfold action of taking, blessing, breaking, and giving that marked both the feeding of the five thousand and the institution of the Lord's Supper. The moment of recognition is the moment of disappearance. They return to Jerusalem. He is risen indeed.

On the Great Commission

The Great Commission (Section 185) is the most expansive command in the Synoptic Gospels and the final word of the entire narrative project. Matthew's formulation — *"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you"* — is the fullest expression of the risen Jesus's command and the only explicit Trinitarian formula in the Synoptic Gospels.

The command given in Galilee, on the mountain where he had appointed them, before disciples of whom "some doubted" — the commission is given to the doubting, not the certain. And the promise with which it closes — *"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"* — answers the question the disciples had been asking in various forms since Gethsemane: where will you be? The answer is: always, with you, to the end.

Luke closes his Gospel not on the mountain but with the ascension near Bethany and the disciples returning to Jerusalem with great joy, continually in the Temple, blessing God. The narrative that began with Zechariah the priest burning incense in the Temple while the people prayed without ends with the disciples of Jesus in the same Temple, blessing the same God — but now as witnesses of resurrection and heirs of a commission that will take the message of what they have seen to the ends of the earth.

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A Final Note on the Harmony Project

This harmony has woven together the three Synoptic Gospels — Matthew, Mark, and Luke — from their opening verses through sixteen chapters of continuous narrative, covering the birth and infancy of Jesus, the opening of his ministry, the Sermon on the Mount and its three chapters of ethical teaching, the Galilean ministry with its healings and parables and controversies, the turning point at Caesarea Philippi, the Transfiguration, the journey to Jerusalem, the Temple controversies, the Olivet Discourse, the Passion narrative, and the resurrection.

The translation used throughout has been the **American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901**, which is in the public domain and may be reproduced without restriction.

One hundred and eighty-five sections have been harmonized across three Gospels, following the chronological sequence established by A.T. Robertson's *A Harmony of the Gospels* (1922) as the primary authority, supplemented by Kurt Aland's *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* and Orville Daniel's *A Harmony of the Four Gospels* (2nd ed., 1996).

The three evangelists remain distinct voices even in harmony. Matthew writes for Jewish readers and sees in every event the fulfillment of prophetic scripture. Mark writes with urgency and eyewitness precision, preserving the word *euthys* — immediately — as his characteristic rhythm. Luke writes as a historian for the Greco-Roman world, attentive to the poor, to women, to the outsider, to the exact hour and the specific prayer.

Together they present not three versions of one story but one story told through three irreducibly different perspectives — which is itself the shape of all human witness to events that exceed the capacity of any single account to contain.

Chapter Seventeen

John 1, 3, 17 — The Prologue; Nicodemus; The High Priestly Prayer

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Part Sixteen: The Fourth Gospel — Prologue, Witness, and the Prayer

Section 186 — The Prologue: In the Beginning Was the Word [John 1:1–18]

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not.

There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light.

There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.

John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me: for he was before me.

For of his fulness we all received, and grace for grace.

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Section 187 — John the Baptist's Testimony [John 1:19–34]

And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent unto him from Jerusalem priests and Levites to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; and he confessed, I am not the Christ.

And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elijah? And he saith, I am not. Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No.

They said therefore unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said Isaiah the prophet.

And they had been sent from the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, neither Elijah, neither the prophet?

John answered them, saying, I baptize in water: in the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, even he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose.

These things were done in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is become before me: for he was before me.

And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, for this cause came I baptizing in water.

And John bare witness, saying, I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit.

And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.

Section 188 — The First Disciples [John 1:35–51]

Again on the morrow John was standing, and two of his disciples; and he looked upon Jesus as he walked, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Teacher), where abidest thou? He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day: it was about the tenth hour.

One of the two that heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah (which is, being interpreted, Christ). He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas (which is by interpretation, Peter).

On the morrow he was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me.

Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Nathanael answered him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee underneath the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

Section 189 — Nicodemus: You Must Be Born Again [John 3:1–21]

Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came unto him by night, and said to him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no one can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?

And no one hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven.

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in him have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him.

He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.

And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God.

Section 190 — The High Priestly Prayer: Glorify Thy Son [John 17:1–5]

These things spake Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee: even as thou gavest him authority over all flesh, that to all whom thou hast given him, he should give eternal life.

And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.

I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do.

And now, Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Section 191 — The High Priestly Prayer: For the Disciples [John 17:6–19]

I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them to me; and they have kept thy word.

Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are from thee: for the words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me.

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine: and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them.

And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are.

While I was with them, I kept them in thy name which thou hast given me: and I guarded them, and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

But now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy made full in themselves.

I have given them thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them from the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil one.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth.

As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.

And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

Section 192 — The High Priestly Prayer: For All Who Will Believe [John 17:20–26]

Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me.

And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me.

Father, I desire that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, the world knew thee not, but I knew thee; and these knew that thou didst send me; and I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Seventeen

On the Gospel of John and the Synoptics

John's Gospel presents the single greatest challenge and the single greatest enrichment to any harmony of the Gospels. It was written last among the four canonical Gospels — most scholars date it to the 90s C.E., several decades after the Synoptics — and its author demonstrably knew at least some Synoptic material while deliberately choosing to supplement rather than repeat it. John omits the birth narrative, the Galilean parables, the Sermon on the Mount, the

Transfiguration, and the institution of the Lord's Supper. He includes instead extended theological discourses, the raising of Lazarus, the healing of the man born blind, the washing of the disciples' feet, and five chapters of Farewell Discourse including the High Priestly Prayer.

The early church father Clement of Alexandria (c. 200 C.E.) described John as having written "a spiritual gospel" after the others had already recorded "the bodily facts." This ancient characterization captures something genuinely true: John's Gospel operates at a different register from the Synoptics, interpreting rather than merely narrating, making explicit the theological content that the Synoptics often present in action without commentary.

On the Prologue

The Prologue of John (Section 186) is the most theologically concentrated passage in the entire New Testament. Its opening words — *"In the beginning was the Word"* (*En archē ēn ho Logos*) — deliberately echo the opening of Genesis (*"In the beginning God created"*) and establish from the first sentence that what follows is the story of a new creation. The *Logos* (Word) is presented as pre-existent, co-equal with God, and the agent of all creation — a claim that goes beyond anything in the Synoptic Gospels.

The term *Logos* is drawn simultaneously from two traditions. In the Hebrew tradition, the *Word* (*dabar*) of God is the active divine self-expression by which God creates (Psalm 33:6: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made") and through which the prophets speak. In the Greek philosophical tradition — particularly Stoic and Platonic philosophy — the *Logos* is the rational principle that orders the universe, the divine reason immanent in all things. John's prologue addresses both audiences simultaneously, claiming that the Jewish God's creative Word and the Greek philosopher's cosmic Reason are the same person, and that he has become flesh in history.

The pivot of the entire prologue is verse 14: *"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us."* The Greek *eskenōsen* — "dwelt" or "tabernacled" — echoes the imagery of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, the portable tent-sanctuary where God dwelt in the midst of Israel during the Exodus. The Word-made-flesh is the new Tabernacle: the place where heaven and earth meet, where God's glory dwells among his people.

On "Behold the Lamb of God"

John the Baptist's proclamation in John 1:29 — *"Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world"* — introduces an interpretive framework for the crucifixion that is not explicit in the Synoptics. The "Lamb of God" language draws on multiple Old Testament backgrounds simultaneously: the Passover lamb (Exodus 12), whose blood on the doorposts protected Israel from the angel of death; the daily Temple burnt offering lambs; and most powerfully, the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53:7, who "is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." John places this proclamation at the opening of the Gospel — before the ministry has begun — as the interpretive lens through which everything that follows is to be read.

On Nicodemus

The conversation with Nicodemus (Section 189) is the first of John's extended theological dialogues. Nicodemus — a Pharisee, a ruler of the Jews, a teacher of Israel — comes to Jesus by

night. The timing is significant: night in John's Gospel carries theological weight (Judas goes out "and it was night," John 13:30). Nicodemus comes at the boundary of darkness and light, curious but cautious.

Jesus's response bypasses his opening compliment entirely and goes immediately to the radical condition: *"Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* The Greek *anōthen* means both "again" and "from above" — a deliberate double meaning that Nicodemus hears in only one register ("again," physically) while Jesus means primarily the other ("from above," spiritually). The dialogue that follows is driven by this misunderstanding, which Jesus uses to introduce the concept of Spirit-birth.

The conversation culminates in John 3:16 — arguably the most quoted verse in the New Testament: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."* The verse functions as a summary of the entire Gospel's theology: divine initiative (God gave), the scope of that love (the world, not merely Israel), the means (the giving of the Son), the condition (believing on him), and the outcome (eternal life, not perishing). The Nicodemus dialogue then extends this to the themes of judgment, light, and darkness that run through the entire Fourth Gospel.

On the High Priestly Prayer

John 17 (Sections 190–192) is unique in all of ancient literature. It is a prayer — the longest single prayer recorded in the Gospels — spoken by Jesus to the Father on the night of his arrest, in the presence of his disciples, at the end of the Farewell Discourse. It is called the "High Priestly Prayer" by the theologian David Chytraeus (1530–1600), who noted its priestly character: Jesus intercedes for himself, for his disciples, and for all future believers, much as the High Priest on the Day of Atonement entered the Holy of Holies to intercede for Israel. The parallel is not incidental; John has structured the entire Passion narrative as a priestly sacrifice, and John 17 is its liturgical apex.

The prayer divides into three movements, each corresponding to a section of this harmony.

For himself (Section 190, verses 1–5): Jesus prays that the Father glorify him — not for his own sake but so that the Son may glorify the Father. The definition of eternal life given here — *"that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ"* — is the most compact statement of Johannine soteriology in the Gospel. Salvation is relational knowledge, not merely information about God. And the pre-existent glory Jesus prays to receive back — *"the glory which I had with thee before the world was"* — is the most explicit statement of pre-existence in the Gospel tradition.

For the disciples (Section 191, verses 6–19): Jesus prays for those who have been given to him — those who kept his word, believed his teaching, and will be left in the world when he goes to the Father. The prayer has three petitions: keep them in thy name (preservation); keep them from the evil one (protection); sanctify them in the truth (consecration). The phrase *"thy word is truth"* is among the most concentrated affirmations of scriptural authority in the New Testament. The disciples are to be sanctified — set apart, made holy — through the truth of God's word, even as Jesus consecrates himself for their sake.

For all who will believe (Section 192, verses 20–26): The prayer's horizon expands from the eleven in the room to all future believers — across every century, culture, and generation — who will come to faith through the apostolic witness. The central petition is unity: *"that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us."* The unity prayed for is not uniformity of organization or doctrine in a narrow sense but the relational unity of mutual indwelling — the same *perichorēsis* (mutual interpenetration) that characterizes the relationship of the Father and the Son, extended by grace to the entire community of believers.

The prayer closes with the final disclosure: *"I made known unto them thy name, and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them."* The name of God — which in Hebrew thought is not merely a label but the disclosure of God's character and presence — has been made known through Jesus. The love that the Father has for the Son is the love that flows into and through the community of believers. The prayer ends not with petition but with promise: *"I in them."*

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Part Seventeen: The Woman at the Well, the Pool of Bethesda, and the Bread of Life

Section 193 — The Woman at the Well [John 4:1–26]

When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.

And he must needs pass through Samaria.

So he cometh to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph: and Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. For his disciples were gone away into the city to buy food.

The Samaritan woman therefore saith unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, who am a Samaritan woman? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle?

Jesus answered and said unto her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw.

Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

The woman answered and said unto him, I have no husband. Jesus saith unto her, Thou saidst well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: this hast thou said truly.

The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship that which ye know not: we worship that which we know; for salvation is from the Jews.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers.

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh (he that is called Christ): when he is come, he will declare unto us all things.

Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

Section 194 — The Woman's Testimony; the Harvest Field [John 4:27–42]

And upon this came his disciples; and they marvelled that he was speaking with a woman; yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why speakest thou with her?

So the woman left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the people, Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?

They went out of the city, and were coming to him.

In the meanwhile the disciples prayed him, saying, Rabbi, eat. But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not. The disciples therefore said one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to accomplish his work.

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest. He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal; that he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. For herein is the saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.

And from that city many of the Samaritans believed on him because of the word of the woman, who testified, He told me all things that ever I did.

So when the Samaritans came unto him, they besought him to abide with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his word; and they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.

Section 195 — The Healing of the Nobleman's Son [John 4:43–54]

And after the two days he went forth from thence into Galilee. For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honor in his own country.

So he came again unto Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son; for he was at the point of death.

Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe.

The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. The man believed the word that Jesus spake unto him, and he went his way.

And as he was now going down, his servants met him, saying, that his son lived. So he inquired of them the hour when he began to amend. They said therefore unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at that hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

This is again the second sign that Jesus did, having come out of Judaea into Galilee.

Section 196 — The Healing at the Pool of Bethesda [John 5:1–18]

After these things there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a multitude of them that were sick, blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole, with whatsoever disease he was holden.

And a certain man was there, who had been thirty and eight years in his infirmity. When Jesus saw him lying, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wouldest thou be made whole?

The sick man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

Jesus saith unto him, Arise, take up thy bed, and walk. And straightway the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.

Now it was the sabbath on that day. So the Jews said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed.

But he answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

They asked him, Who is the man that said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? But he that was healed knew not who it was; for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in the place.

Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee.

The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole. And for this cause the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did these things on the sabbath. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh even until now, and I work.

For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Section 197 — The Discourse on the Son's Authority [John 5:19–47]

Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner.

For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and greater works than these will he show him, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom he will.

For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father that sent him.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live.

For as the Father hath life in himself, even so gave he to the Son also to have life in himself: and he gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man.

Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.

I can of myself do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. It is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness unto the truth. But the witness which I receive is not from man: howbeit I say these things, that ye may be saved.

He was the lamp that burneth and shineth; and ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light. But the witness which I have is greater than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

And the Father that sent me, he hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he sent, him ye believe not.

Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life.

I receive not glory from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in yourselves. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

How can ye believe, who receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?

Think not that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

Section 198 — The Feeding of the Five Thousand: John's Account [John 6:1–15]

After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick.

And Jesus went up into the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand.

Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

Philip answered him, Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little.

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, who hath five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many?

Jesus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would.

And when they were filled, he saith unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost. So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over unto them that had eaten.

When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world. Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone.

Section 199 — Walking on the Water: John's Account [John 6:16–21]

And when evening came, his disciples went down unto the sea; and they entered into a boat, and were going over the sea unto Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.

And the sea was rising by reason of a great wind that blew. When therefore they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they behold Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the boat: and they were afraid.

But he saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. They were willing therefore to receive him into the boat: and straightway the boat was at the land whither they were going.

Section 200 — The Bread of Life Discourse [John 6:22–71]

On the morrow the multitude that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, save one, and that Jesus entered not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples went away alone (howbeit there came boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks): when the multitude therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they themselves got into the boats, and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.

And when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled. Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him the Father, even God, hath sealed.

They said therefore unto him, What must we do, that we may work the works of God?

Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

They said therefore unto him, What then doest thou for a sign, that we may see, and believe thee? what workest thou? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.

Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

They said therefore unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

But I said unto you, that ye have seen me, and yet believe not. All that which the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

And this is the will of him that sent me, that of all that which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

The Jews therefore murmured concerning him, because he said, I am the bread which came down out of heaven.

And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how doth he now say, I am come down out of heaven?

Jesus answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day.

It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me.

Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he that is from God, he hath seen the Father.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life.

I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which cometh down out of heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.

The Jews therefore strove one with another, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him.

As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me.

This is the bread which came down out of heaven: not as the fathers ate, and died; he that eateth this bread shall live for ever.

These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it?

But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said unto them, Doth this cause you to stumble? What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before? It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life.

But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray him.

And he said, For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father.

Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

Jesus said therefore unto the twelve, Would ye also go away?

Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God.

Jesus answered them, Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil? Now he spake of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Eighteen

On the Woman at the Well

The conversation at the well (Section 193) is the longest recorded dialogue between Jesus and any individual in the four Gospels — longer than the Nicodemus conversation, longer than any exchange with the Pharisees or disciples. Its setting is doubly transgressive: Jesus speaks to a woman alone (scandalizing the disciples, John 4:27) and to a Samaritan (a people held in contempt by Jews as half-breed schismatics since the Assyrian deportations of the eighth century B.C.E.). The conversation moves through five distinct stages: the request for water; the offer of living water; the exposure of the woman's marital history; the theological discussion about the proper place of worship; and the climactic self-disclosure — the only instance in the Synoptics or John where Jesus unambiguously identifies himself as the Messiah in response to a direct question: *"I that speak unto thee am he."*

The woman's five husbands and the man she currently lives with who is not her husband has generated extensive interpretive discussion. Some read it allegorically — the five husbands as the five gods introduced into Samaria by the five nations of 2 Kings 17:24–41. Others read it straightforwardly as a biographical fact about a woman with a complicated personal history. Both readings are possible, and they are not mutually exclusive.

The declaration on worship — *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth"* — is the theological center of the passage and one of the most radical statements on worship in the New Testament. It dissolves the geographical dispute between Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim by transcending it entirely: the locus of true worship is neither mountain but the interior of the worshipper, constituted by the Spirit and oriented toward truth. This saying is the Johannine counterpart to the Sermon on the Mount's teaching that inward disposition matters more than outward observance.

The woman's testimony to the city — *"Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ?"* — is the first extended evangelistic speech in John's Gospel, and it is given by a Samaritan woman. The disciples, who have been sent to buy food, return and are astonished to find Jesus speaking with her. They say nothing. She has already gone. The harvest Jesus describes to them — *"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest"* — is already underway before their eyes.

On the Nobleman's Son

The healing of the nobleman's son (Section 195) is the second of John's seven "signs" — the word John consistently uses (*sēmeion*, sign) where the Synoptics use "miracle" or "mighty

work." The Johannine miracle vocabulary is deliberate: miracles in John are not primarily demonstrations of power but signs pointing beyond themselves to theological realities. Each of the seven signs in John's Gospel is paired with a discourse that unpacks its theological meaning: the feeding of the five thousand pairs with the Bread of Life Discourse; the healing of the blind man pairs with the discourse on light; the raising of Lazarus pairs with the declaration "I am the resurrection and the life."

The nobleman's son healed at a distance — Jesus simply says *"Go thy way; thy son liveth"* and the healing is simultaneous with the word — illustrates a principle that runs through all of John's sign-narratives: Jesus's word is sufficient. It need not be accompanied by touch, by proximity, or by any physical medium. The word itself is the creative and healing power of the Logos made flesh.

On the Pool of Bethesda

The healing at Bethesda (Section 196) introduces a detail absent from the Synoptic miracle narratives: the healed man does not know who healed him. Jesus "conveyed himself away," and when found later in the Temple, identifies himself. The man then reports to the authorities that it was Jesus who healed him — an act that is sometimes read as an act of betrayal (comparable to Judas) and sometimes as simple compliance with the religious authorities' question. John does not adjudicate.

The sabbath controversy that follows is the most extended in the Gospel tradition. Jesus's response — *"My Father worketh even until now, and I work"* — provokes the authorities' charge of both sabbath violation and blasphemy: he calls God his own Father, making himself equal with God. This is the charge that will eventually produce his condemnation: John frames it clearly and early.

On the Discourse of John 5

John 5:19–47 (Section 197) is the most sustained theological statement on the relationship between the Father and the Son in the Gospel tradition. Its argument moves through three stages. First, the mutual dependence of the Son on the Father: the Son does nothing of himself but only what he sees the Father doing — not limitation but intimate relational knowledge. Second, the transfer of divine prerogatives: the Father raises the dead and gives life; so the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no man but has committed all judgment to the Son — so that the honor due the Father is equally due the Son. Third, the witnesses to Jesus: John the Baptist (a lamp that burned and shone), the works the Father has given him, the Father's own testimony, and Moses himself — "he wrote of me."

The most quoted verse of this section — *"Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me"* (5:39) — is the key to the entire discourse. The scriptures are not the source of eternal life; they are the witness pointing to him who is. To possess the scriptures without coming to Jesus is to have the map without making the journey.

On the Bread of Life Discourse

John 6:22–71 (Section 200) is the theological and exegetical center of John's Gospel and the single most debated passage in the entire New Testament on questions of eucharistic theology. Its content and its exegetical complexity were analyzed in chapter seventeen of this harmony's academic companion volume on the Eucharist; this section presents the text itself in full, allowing the reader to engage the words directly.

Several structural features of the discourse deserve attention. First, the crowd follows Jesus not for theological reasons but because they were filled with bread (6:26). Jesus immediately redirects: work not for the food that perishes but for the food that abides to eternal life. Second, the crowd asks what they must do to work the works of God — still thinking in terms of merit and effort. Jesus's answer redefines the work of God entirely: *"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent"* (6:29). Third, the crowd asks for a sign — ironically, immediately after having witnessed the feeding of five thousand — demanding something comparable to the manna Moses provided in the wilderness. Jesus corrects their reading of history: it was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; it was the Father. And the Father is giving again, now — bread that gives life to the world.

The great claim — *"I am the bread of life"* (*Egō eimi ho artos tēs zōēs*, 6:35) — is the first of the seven *"I am"* sayings of the Fourth Gospel (the others: the light of the world, the door, the good shepherd, the resurrection and the life, the way and the truth and the life, the true vine). The force of *egō eimi* in the context of John's Gospel draws on both the Hebrew divine name YHWH (*'ehyeh*, I AM, Exodus 3:14) and the LXX rendering *egō eimi* used repeatedly in Isaiah's great second-person addresses to Israel. Jesus's *"I am"* sayings are not merely self-descriptions; they are, in John's Gospel, implicit divine self-identifications.

The discourse's climax — *"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have not life in yourselves"* (6:53) — and the subsequent interpretive key — *"It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life"* (6:63) — together constitute the exegetical tension that has divided readers since the second century. The discourse ends with a crisis: many disciples withdraw; Jesus asks the Twelve whether they also will go. Peter's answer — *"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God"* — is the Johannine equivalent of the Synoptic confession at Caesarea Philippi.

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Part Eighteen: The Feast of Tabernacles, the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd, and the Raising of Lazarus

Section 201 — Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles [John 7:1–36]

And after these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judaea, because the Jews sought to kill him.

Now the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles, was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may behold thy works which thou doest. For no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the world.

For even his brethren did not believe on him.

Jesus therefore saith unto them, My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I bear witness of it, that its works are evil.

But when his brethren were gone up unto the feast, then went he also up, not publicly, but as it were in secret.

The Jews therefore sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the multitudes concerning him: some said, He is a good man; others said, Not so, but he leadeth the multitude astray.

But now in the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. The Jews therefore marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

Jesus therefore answered them and said, My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from myself.

He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law? Why seek ye to kill me?

The multitude answered, Thou hast a demon: who seeketh to kill thee?

Jesus answered and said unto them, I did one work, and ye all marvel because thereof. Moses hath given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers); and on the sabbath ye circumcise a man. If a man receiveth circumcision on the sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken; are ye wroth with me, because I made a man every whit whole on the sabbath? Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

Some therefore of them of Jerusalem said, Is not this he whom they seek to kill? And lo, he speaketh openly, and they say nothing unto him. Can it be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ?

Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence he is.

Jesus therefore cried in the temple, teaching and saying, Ye both know me, and know whence I am; and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not.

The officers therefore went to take him: and no one laid his hand on him, because his hour was not yet come.

But of the multitude many believed on him; and they said, When the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than those which this man hath done?

Section 202 — Rivers of Living Water [John 7:37–53]

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water.

But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Some of the multitude therefore, when they heard these words, said, This is of a truth the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee?

The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why did ye not bring him? The officers answered, Never man so spake.

The Pharisees therefore answered them, Are ye also led astray? Hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees? But this multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed.

Nicodemus saith unto them (he that came to him before, being one of them), Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?

They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

Section 203 — The Woman Taken in Adultery [John 7:53–8:11]

And they went every man unto his own house: but Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

And the scribes and the Pharisees bring a woman taken in adultery; and having set her in the midst, they say unto him, Teacher, this woman hath been taken in adultery, in the very act. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such: what then sayest thou of her?

And this they said, trying him, that they might have whereof to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground.

But when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

And again he stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground.

And they, when they heard it, went out one by one, beginning from the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst.

And Jesus lifted up himself, and said unto her, Woman, where are they? did no man condemn thee?

And she said, No man, Lord.

And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn thee: go thy way; from henceforth sin no more.

Section 204 — I Am the Light of the World [John 8:12–59]

Again therefore Jesus spake unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.

The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest witness of thyself; thy witness is not true.

Jesus answered and said unto them, Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye know not whence I come, or whither I go.

Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. Yea and if I judge, my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

Yea and in your law it is written, that the witness of two men is true. I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

They said therefore unto him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye know neither me, nor my Father: if ye knew me, ye would know my Father also.

Jesus therefore said unto them, I go away, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sin: whither I go, ye cannot come.

I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

They said therefore unto him, Who art thou? Jesus said unto them, Even that which I have also spoken unto you from the beginning.

Jesus therefore said, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself, but as the Father taught me, I speak these things.

As he spake these things, many believed on him.

Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

They answered unto him, We are Abraham’s seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin. And the bondservant abideth not in the house for ever: the son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; yet ye seek to kill me, because my word hath not free course in you.

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.

The Jews therefore said unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

They took up stones therefore to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

Section 205 — The Healing of the Man Born Blind [John 9:1–41]

And as he passed by, he saw a man blind from his birth.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?

Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. When I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and anointed his eyes with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation, Sent). He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

The neighbors therefore, and they that saw him aforetime, that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Others said, It is he: others said, No, but he is like him. He said, I am he.

They bring to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind. Now it was the sabbath on the day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

The Pharisees therefore also asked him again how he received his sight. And he said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and I see.

Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them.

They said therefore unto the blind man again, What sayest thou of him, in that he opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet.

The Jews therefore did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight, and asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? how then doth he now see?

His parents answered and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but how he now seeth, we know not; or who opened his eyes, we know not: ask him; he is of age; he shall speak for himself.

They called therefore the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner.

He therefore answered, Whether he is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

They said therefore unto him, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

He answered them, I told you even now, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? would ye also become his disciples?

And they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God hath spoken unto Moses: but as for this man, we know not whence he is.

The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is the marvel, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he opened mine eyes. We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and do his will, him he heareth. Since the world began it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.

They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and finding him, he said, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?

Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee.

And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

And Jesus said, For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind.

Section 206 — The Good Shepherd [John 10:1–21]

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

Jesus therefore said unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and go out, and shall find pasture.

The thief cometh not, but that he may steal, and kill, and destroy: I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth them: he fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and they shall become one flock, one shepherd.

Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from my Father.

There arose a division again among the Jews because of these words.

Section 207 — The Feast of Dedication: I and the Father Are One [John 10:22–42]

And it was the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem: it was winter; and Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch.

The Jews therefore came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us plainly.

Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believe not: the works that I do in my Father's name, these bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

My Father, who hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

I and the Father are one.

The Jews took up stones again to stone him.

Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from the Father; for which of those works do ye stone me?

The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), say ye of him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.

They sought again to take him: and he went forth out of their hand.

Section 208 — The Death and Raising of Lazarus [John 11:1–44]

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, of the village of Mary and her sister Martha. And it was that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

The sisters therefore sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

But when Jesus heard it, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby.

Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

When therefore he heard that he was sick, he abode at that time two days in the place where he was.

Then after this he saith to the disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

The disciples say unto him, Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him.

These things spake he: and after this he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus is fallen asleep; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

The disciples therefore said unto him, Lord, if he is fallen asleep, he will recover.

Now Jesus had spoken of his death: but they thought that he spake of taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus therefore said unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

So when Jesus came, he found that he had been in the tomb four days already.

Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.

Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary still sat in the house.

Martha therefore said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee.

Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die. Believest thou this?

She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world.

And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Teacher is here, and calleth thee.

And she, when she heard it, arose quickly, and went unto him.

When Mary therefore came where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They say unto him, Lord, come and see.

Jesus wept.

The Jews therefore said, Behold how he loved him!

But some of them said, Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him that was blind, have caused that this man also should not die?

Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

Jesus saith, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time the body decayeth; for he hath been dead four days.

Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me.

And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin.

Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Section 209 — The Council's Decision [John 11:45–57]

Many therefore of the Jews, who came to Mary and beheld that which he did, believed on him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done.

The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many signs. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.

But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor do ye take account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

Now this he said not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he might also gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad.

So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put him to death.

Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed thence into the country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there he tarried with the disciples.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Nineteen

On the Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles (*Sukkoth*) discourse in John 7–8 (Sections 201–204) is the most extended and most confrontational of Jesus's Jerusalem encounters in John's Gospel. The feast itself — a seven-day autumn festival commemorating Israel's wilderness wandering, celebrated with water-libation ceremonies and the illumination of the Temple court with great golden lampstands — provides the symbolic background for two of Jesus's greatest self-disclosures: the rivers of living water (water libation imagery) and the light of the world (lampstand imagery).

Jesus arrives at the feast in secret and teaches publicly in the Temple from the midst of the feast. The crowd is divided. The authorities send officers to arrest him; the officers return empty-handed with the most remarkable assessment in John's arrest narratives: *"Never man so spake."* Nicodemus, already known to the reader from John 3, appears here as a lone dissenting voice in the Sanhedrin — raising a procedural objection that costs him his colleagues' contempt but not his post.

On the Woman Taken in Adultery

The passage known as the *Pericope Adulterae* (Section 203, John 7:53–8:11) occupies a unique status in New Testament textual criticism. It is absent from the oldest and most reliable Greek manuscripts of John's Gospel (Papyrus 66, Papyrus 75, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, and others) and is marked with asterisks or obeli in several manuscripts that do include it, indicating ancient doubt about its authenticity. It appears in different locations in different manuscripts — some placing it after John 7:36, some after John 21:25, some after Luke 21:38. The ASV and most modern critical translations include it but bracket it or note its textual uncertainty.

Despite its uncertain manuscript standing, the passage is almost universally regarded as preserving a genuine tradition about Jesus — its style is more Synoptic than Johannine, its content is consistent with Jesus's character and teaching, and Eusebius mentions a similar story in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* and in Papias. The story captures with extraordinary precision the dual character of Jesus's response to moral failure: radical refusal of condemning judgment (*"Neither do I condemn thee"*) paired with radical moral demand (*"Go thy way; from henceforth sin no more"*). These two elements — grace without sentimentality, forgiveness without moral license — are precisely the combination that characterizes Jesus's dealings with the morally compromised throughout all four Gospels.

The detail that Jesus writes on the ground — twice — is the only instance in the Gospels of Jesus writing anything. What he wrote has generated endless speculation and is not recorded. Its

narrative function is to create a pause — a silence in which the accusers are left with their own consciences — before the devastating response.

On "Before Abraham Was, I Am"

The climax of the John 8 discourse (Section 204) is among the most theologically explosive statements in the entire New Testament: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."* The Greek *prin Abraam genesthai, egō eimi* sets up a deliberate grammatical contrast: Abraham "came into being" (*genesthai*, the verb of becoming); Jesus "I am" (*egō eimi*, the verb of being without becoming). The syntax itself encodes the theological claim: Abraham had a beginning; Jesus does not. Jesus exists in the eternal present that transcends the category of beginning altogether.

The *egō eimi* here directly echoes the divine name disclosed to Moses in Exodus 3:14 (*'ehyeh asher 'ehyeh*, "I AM WHO I AM"; LXX: *egō eimi ho ōn*). The crowd understands the claim immediately and reaches for stones — the prescribed penalty for blasphemy under Leviticus 24:16. This is not a misunderstanding; it is a recognition. They hear exactly what Jesus means to say and respond to it as blasphemy. The stoning attempt establishes conclusively that the *egō eimi* sayings in John's Gospel are not merely self-descriptions but divine self-identifications.

On the Man Born Blind

The healing of the man born blind (Section 205) is the most elaborately narrated miracle in any of the four Gospels and one of the most dramatically structured narratives in the New Testament. John devotes an entire chapter to what the Synoptics would have treated in a few verses, because for John the miracle is simultaneously a physical healing, a theological sign, and a dramatic illustration of his Gospel's central theme: *"For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind"* (9:39).

The narrative unfolds through a series of interrogations — the neighbors, the Pharisees, the man's parents, the Pharisees again, and finally Jesus himself — each of which reveals the hardening of the authorities and the growing clarity and confidence of the healed man. His theological development through the chapter is a study in progressive illumination: first he calls Jesus "the man called Jesus" (9:11); then "a prophet" (9:17); then, after the most confrontational exchange, he defends Jesus on the grounds that no sinner could do such signs; and finally, when Jesus reveals himself, he worships him with the full confession: "Lord, I believe" (9:38). The man born blind ends the chapter seeing in every sense. The Pharisees who see with physical eyes end the chapter blind in every sense that matters.

The disciples' opening question — "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" — reflects the common Second Temple assumption of a direct correlation between suffering and sin (see also Job's friends). Jesus's answer demolishes the assumption without explaining why suffering exists: the man's blindness is not the result of sin but the occasion for the works of God to be manifest. This reframing does not make blindness good; it refuses to make it a moral verdict.

On the Good Shepherd

The Good Shepherd discourse (Section 206) stands in immediate narrative connection to the healing of the blind man: Jesus has just spoken of those who are blind refusing to see; now he describes his own sheep as those who hear his voice and follow him. The contrast — blind Pharisees who claim to see, and sheep who hear and follow — is the same contrast rendered in pastoral rather than optical imagery.

The discourse contains two *"I am"* sayings in close proximity: *"I am the door of the sheep"* (10:7) and *"I am the good shepherd"* (10:11, 14). As the door, Jesus is the only legitimate access point to the sheepfold — an absolute claim of exclusive mediation. As the good shepherd, he is defined above all by one act: *"The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep."* The hireling flees when the wolf comes because the sheep are not his own; the good shepherd lays down his life precisely because they are. The voluntary character of this laying down is emphasized three times: *"I lay down my life… No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself"* (10:15, 17, 18).

The saying about "other sheep… not of this fold" (10:16) is one of John's most universalist gestures: the good shepherd's scope is not limited to the Jewish community to whom he speaks but includes all who will hear his voice. The one flock under one shepherd anticipates the Great Commission's universal scope.

On "I and the Father Are One"

The declaration *"I and the Father are one"* (*Egō kai ho Patēr hen esmen*, John 10:30) at the Feast of Dedication (Section 207) is the most compact Trinitarian statement in John's Gospel. The Greek *hen* (one) is neuter — not masculine *heis* (one person) but neuter *hen* (one thing, one reality, one in nature). The statement claims not identity of persons but unity of essence and will. The crowd again reaches for stones; Jesus again deflects the violence; but the charge is now explicit: *"Thou, being a man, makest thyself God"* (10:33). And Jesus does not deny the charge. He redirects and defends it.

On the Raising of Lazarus

The raising of Lazarus (Section 208) is the climax of the Book of Signs and the most theologically weighted miracle in the Gospel tradition. It is unique to John, and its placement is deliberate: it is the seventh and final sign in John's Gospel, and it is the direct cause of the Sanhedrin's decision to kill Jesus (Section 209). The miracle that gives life precipitates the council that decides on death.

Three details stand out above all others. First, *"Jesus wept"* (11:35) — the shortest verse in the English New Testament and one of the most theologically rich. The Greek *edakrysen* (he shed tears) is distinct from the *klaiousa* (wailing, weeping loudly) used of Mary and the crowd. Jesus weeps quietly, intimately. He who is the resurrection and the life weeps at the tomb of his friend. His deity does not distance him from grief; it enters it.

Second, the exchange with Martha (11:21–27) contains one of the supreme *"I am"* sayings: *"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."* This is not a promise about a future

resurrection only; it is a claim about a present reality. The resurrection is not an event Jesus will cause; it is a person he is. Martha's confession — *"I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world"* — is the fullest human confession of Jesus's identity in John's Gospel before the Passion.

Third, the prayer before the tomb (11:41–42) is the most transparent moment of Jesus's relationship with the Father in the public ministry: *"Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the multitude that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me."* The prayer is for the crowd's benefit, not for Jesus's. He thanks, not asks — the request has already been made in the intimacy of the Father-Son relationship before the tomb was approached.

"Lazarus, come forth." He comes. Still bound in grave-clothes. *"Loose him, and let him go."*

On Caiaphas's Prophecy

The irony of John 11:49–52 (Section 209) is among the sharpest in the Gospel tradition. Caiaphas, the high priest, delivers what he intends as a calculating piece of realpolitik: *"It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."* John interprets this as prophecy — not from Caiaphas's own understanding but from the prophetic office he holds. The high priest who will preside over the condemnation of Jesus unknowingly pronounces the theological meaning of the death he is engineering. *"Jesus should die for the nation; and not for the nation only, but that he might also gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad."* The words of expediency become, in John's narration, the words of atonement.

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Section 210 — The Anointing at Bethany: John's Account [John 12:1–11]

Jesus therefore six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus raised from the dead.

So they made him a supper there, and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with him.

Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, that should betray him, saith, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred shillings, and given to the poor?

Now this he said, not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag, took away what was put therein.

Jesus therefore said, Suffer her to keep it against the day of my burying. For the poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not always.

The common people therefore of the Jews learned that he was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

Section 211 — The Triumphal Entry: John's Account [John 12:12–19]

On the morrow a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of the palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried out, Hosanna: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.

And Jesus, having found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

The multitude therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from the dead, bare witness. For this cause also the multitude went and met him, for that they heard that he had done this sign.

The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him.

Section 212 — The Greeks Who Seek Jesus; the Hour Has Come [John 12:20–36]

Now there were certain Greeks among those that went up to worship at the feast: these therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: Andrew cometh, and Philip, and they tell Jesus.

And Jesus answereth them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.

He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will the Father honor.

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour.

Father, glorify thy name.

There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

The multitude therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it had thundered: others said, An angel hath spoken to him.

Jesus answered and said, This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes.

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself.

But this he said, signifying by what manner of death he should die.

The multitude therefore answered him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

Jesus therefore said unto them, Yet a little while is the light among you. Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not: and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

While ye have the light, believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light.

Section 213 — The Washing of the Disciples' Feet [John 13:1–20]

Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself.

Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

So he cometh to Simon Peter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter.

Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet.

Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

Jesus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him.

If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.

Section 214 — The Departure of Judas [John 13:21–30]

When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

The disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

There was at the table reclining in Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoneth to him, and saith unto him, Tell us who it is of whom he speaketh.

He leaning back, as he was, on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

Jesus therefore answereth, He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him. So when he had dipped the sop, he taketh and giveth it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

And after the sop, then entered Satan into him. Jesus therefore saith unto him, What thou doest, do quickly.

Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus said unto him, Buy what things we have need of for the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

He then having received the sop went out straightway: and it was night.

Section 215 — A New Commandment; Peter's Denial Foretold [John 13:31–38]

When therefore he was gone out, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; and God shall glorify him in himself, and straightway shall he glorify him.

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you.

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards.

Peter saith unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now? I will lay down my life for thee.

Jesus answereth, Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Section 216 — The Father's House; I Am the Way [John 14:1–14]

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

And whither I go, ye know the way.

Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but through me.

If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works.

Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father.

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Section 217 — The Promise of the Paraclete [John 14:15–31]

If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you.

I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth me no more; but ye behold me: because I live, ye shall live also.

In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him.

Judas (not Iscariot) saith unto him, Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

He that loveth me not keepeth not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful.

Ye heard how I said to you, I go away, and I come unto you. If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I.

Section 218 — The Vine and the Branches [John 15:1–17]

I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit.

Already ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you.

Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing.

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples.

Even as the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you: abide ye in my love.

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you.

No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known unto you.

Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

These things I command you, that ye may love one another.

Section 219 — The World's Hatred; the Spirit of Truth [John 15:18–16:15]

If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.

But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be caused to stumble. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God.

And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told you.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you.

And he, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged.

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.

Section 220 — Sorrow Will Turn to Joy; I Have Overcome the World [John 16:16–33]

A little while, and ye behold me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see me.

Some of his disciples therefore said one to another, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye behold me not; and again a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

Jesus perceived that they were desirous to ask him, and he said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves concerning this, that I said, A little while, and ye behold me not, and again a little while, and ye shall see me?

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for the joy that a man is born into the world.

And ye therefore now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh away from you.

And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full.

These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: the hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but shall tell you plainly of the Father.

I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father.

His disciples say, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now know we that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Twenty

On the Anointing at Bethany in John

John's account of the anointing at Bethany (Section 210) differs from Matthew and Mark's account (Chapter 15 of this harmony, Section 163) in several details. John identifies the woman as Mary — Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus — and places the anointing six days before Passover, before the Triumphal Entry. Matthew and Mark place an anointing two days before Passover and identify the host as Simon the leper without naming the woman. Some harmonists treat these as two separate events; others treat them as one event with differing details. This harmony treats them as separate incidents, presenting John's account in its Johannine context.

John alone identifies the objector as Judas Iscariot and provides the parenthetical indictment of his character: *"not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag, took away what was put therein."* The detail is precise and damning, and it connects the greed that drove Judas to complain about the ointment to the greed that will shortly drive him to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.

On the Greeks Who Seek Jesus

The arrival of Greeks (*Hellēnes*) wishing to see Jesus (Section 212) is the trigger for one of the most important declarations in John's Gospel: *"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified."* Throughout the Fourth Gospel, Jesus has consistently deflected premature urgency with the phrase "my hour has not yet come" (2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). Now, with Gentiles seeking him — a proleptic sign of the universal mission — the hour arrives.

The grain of wheat that must die before bearing fruit is Jesus's single most direct prediction of his own death in John's Gospel, stated in natural and parabolic language rather than the explicit passion-prediction formula of the Synoptics. The principle extends beyond Jesus: *"He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."* This is the Johannine version of the Synoptic saying on taking up the cross.

The divine voice from heaven — the third and final such voice in John's Gospel (the first at the baptism, the second at the Transfiguration in the Synoptic tradition, though John does not record the Transfiguration) — confirms: *"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."* The crowd hears thunder; Jesus explains it was for their sakes.

On the Washing of Feet

John 13's opening sentence (Section 213) is among the most beautiful in the Gospel tradition: *"having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end."* The Greek *eis telos* means both "to the end" (temporally — until death) and "to the uttermost" (qualitatively — completely, perfectly). Both meanings operate simultaneously. The washing of feet is John's equivalent of the Synoptic institution of the Lord's Supper — not a replacement for it but an interpretation of it: the Lord who will give his body for his disciples here enacts servanthood in its most concrete and culturally unmistakable form.

Peter's refusal — *"Thou shalt never wash my feet"* — and Jesus's answer — *"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me"* — reveals the deeper meaning: the washing is not merely a lesson in humility but a participation in what Jesus is doing for the world. To refuse it is to refuse him. Peter's characteristic overcorrection — *"Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head"* — receives a gentle correction of its own.

The command that follows — *"ye also ought to wash one another's feet"* — is the practical application of the entire Farewell Discourse's central theme: love one another as I have loved you. The measure of the love commanded is the measure of the love demonstrated: a Lord on his knees before his disciples.

On the New Commandment

The command of John 13:34 (Section 215) — *"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you"* — is described as "new" not because the commandment to love is new (it appears in Leviticus 19:18, cited repeatedly in the Synoptics as one of the two great commandments) but because its standard is new. The standard is no longer "as yourself" but "as I have loved you." The love of Jesus for his disciples — servant love, self-giving love, foot-washing love, cross-bearing love — is the new measure of the love required among his followers. This is the commandment that Jesus repeats as the single ethical summary of the entire Farewell Discourse (15:12, 17).

On "I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"

John 14:6 (Section 216) is the sixth of the seven great *"I am"* sayings of the Fourth Gospel: *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but through me."* All three nouns — the way, the truth, the life — have been thematic throughout John's Gospel. Jesus has spoken of the truth (8:32: *"the truth shall make you free"*); he has spoken of life (*"I am the bread of life"*, *"I am the resurrection and the life"*); he has spoken of himself as the only legitimate access point (*"I am the door"*). This saying gathers all three threads into a single comprehensive declaration.

The claim of exclusive mediation — *"no one cometh unto the Father, but through me"* — is the most absolute exclusivist claim in any Gospel and one of the most contested verses in contemporary theological discussion. In its Johannine context, it is not primarily a statement about the fate of those who have never heard of Jesus but about the identity of the One who makes the Father accessible to those who seek him.

Philip's request — *"Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us"* — and Jesus's response — *"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"* — is the most direct identification of Jesus with the Father in the Gospel tradition. Not identity of persons, but identity of revelation: to see Jesus is to see the Father, because Jesus is the perfect and complete expression of who the Father is.

On the Paraclete

The promise of the Paraclete (*Paraklētos*, variously translated as Comforter, Advocate, Helper, Counselor) in John 14–16 (Sections 217 and 219) is the most extended pneumatology in the New Testament. The Paraclete appears in four "Paraclete sayings" across the Farewell Discourse:

First (14:16–17): the Father will give another Paraclete who will be with the disciples forever — the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive because it cannot see him, but who will dwell in the disciples. Second (14:26): the Holy Spirit sent in Jesus's name will teach all things and bring to remembrance all that Jesus has spoken. Third (15:26–27): the Paraclete sent from the Father — the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father — will bear witness of Jesus. Fourth (16:7–15): the Paraclete will convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and will guide the disciples into all truth, declaring the things that are to come and glorifying Jesus.

The term *Paraklētos* is a legal term — one called alongside to help, an advocate in a legal proceeding. The fourfold function described in these sayings — dwelling within the disciples, teaching, bearing witness, convicting — is the continuation of Jesus's own ministry by the Spirit after the departure. Jesus calls the Spirit "another Paraclete" (*allon Paraklēton*), implying that Jesus himself is the first Paraclete — the one who has been alongside the disciples throughout the ministry.

On the Vine and the Branches

The Vine discourse (Section 218) is the seventh and final *"I am"* saying of John's Gospel: *"I am the true vine."* In the Old Testament, the vine is consistently Israel (Isaiah 5:1–7; Psalm 80:8–16; Jeremiah 2:21). Jesus appropriates the image and applies it to himself: he is the true vine of which Israel was the type and anticipation. The disciples are the branches; the Father is the vinedresser.

The central imperative of the discourse — *"Abide in me, and I in you"* — appears ten times in various forms across John 15 and is the single most repeated command in the Farewell Discourse. The fruitfulness of the disciples depends entirely on the quality of their connection to the vine, not on their own effort. *"For apart from me ye can do nothing"* (15:5) is one of the most absolute statements of dependence in the Gospel tradition.

The love commandment reappears here in its fullest form: *"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* Jesus then redefines the disciples' relationship to himself: no longer servants but *friends*, because he has made known to them everything he received from the Father. The friendship is grounded in his initiative: *"Ye did not choose me, but I chose you."*

On "I Have Overcome the World"

The final word of the Farewell Discourse (Section 220) — *"In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"* (*Egō nenikēka ton kosmon*) — is spoken before the cross, not after it. The perfect tense in Greek (*nenikēka*, I have overcome) expresses a completed action whose effects continue: the victory is already accomplished, even as the means of its accomplishment (the cross) lies immediately ahead. This proleptic victory — the speaking of the resurrection's reality from before the cross — is characteristic of John's Gospel throughout. The Farewell Discourse is spoken from a perspective that stands, in some sense, beyond time.

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Chapter Twenty-One

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Part Twenty: The Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus in John

Section 221 — The Arrest in the Garden [John 18:1–14]

When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into which he entered, himself and his disciples.

Now Judas also, who betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus often resorted thither with his disciples. Judas then, having received the band of soldiers, and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

Jesus therefore, knowing all the things that were coming upon him, went forth, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye?

They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. He saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, was standing with them.

When therefore he said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

Again therefore he asked them, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the word might be fulfilled which he spake, Of those whom thou hast given me I lost not one.

Simon Peter therefore having a sword drew it, and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. Now the servant’s name was Malchus.

Jesus therefore said unto Peter, Put up the sword into the sheath: the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

So the band and the chief captain, and the officers of the Jews, seized Jesus and bound him, and led him to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was high priest that year.

Section 222 — Peter's Denial; Jesus Before Annas [John 18:15–27]

And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known unto the high priest, and entered in with Jesus into the court of the high priest; but Peter was standing at the door without.

So the other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, went out and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

The maid therefore that kept the door saith unto Peter, Art thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

Now the servants and the officers were standing there, having made a fire of coals; for it was cold; and they were warming themselves: and Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The high priest therefore asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his teaching.

Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; I ever taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jews come together; and in secret spake I nothing.

Why askest thou me? ask them that have heard me, what I spake unto them: behold, these know the things which I said.

And when he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

Annas therefore sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore unto him, Art thou also one of his disciples? He denied, and said, I am not.

One of the servants of the high priest, being a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

Peter therefore denied again: and straightway the cock crew.

Section 223 — Jesus Before Pilate: The Kingdom Not of This World [John 18:28–40]

They lead Jesus therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium: and it was early; and they themselves entered not into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the passover.

Pilate therefore went out unto them, and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man?

They answered and said unto him, If this man were not an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him up unto thee.

Pilate therefore said unto them, Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.

Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

Jesus answered, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?

Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?

And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find no crime in him.

But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews? They cried out therefore again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Section 224 — Ecce Homo: Behold the Man [John 19:1–16]

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple garment; and they came unto him, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they struck him with their hands.

And Pilate went out again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him out to you, that ye may know that I find no crime in him.

Jesus therefore came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold, the man!

When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take him yourselves, and crucify him: for I find no crime in him.

The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

When Pilate therefore heard this saying, he was the more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

Pilate therefore saith unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to release thee, and have power to crucify thee?

Jesus answered him, Thou wouldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath greater sin.

Upon this Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought Jesus out, and sat down on the judgment-seat at a place called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha.

Now it was the Preparation of the passover: it was about the sixth hour. And he saith unto the Jews, Behold, your King!

They therefore cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified.

Section 225 — The Crucifixion: John's Account [John 19:17–30]

They took Jesus therefore: and he went out, bearing the cross for himself, unto the place called The place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha: where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title therefore read many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and in Latin, and in Greek.

The chief priests of the Jews therefore said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but, that he said, I am King of the Jews.

Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore one to another, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

Now there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold, thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold, thy mother! And from that hour the disciple took her unto his own home.

After this Jesus, knowing that all things are now finished, that the scripture might be accomplished, saith, I thirst.

There was set there a vessel full of vinegar: so they put a sponge full of the vinegar upon hyssop, and brought it to his mouth.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.

Section 226 — The Piercing of the Side; the Burial [John 19:31–42]

The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the sabbath (for the day of that sabbath was a high day), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

The soldiers therefore came, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with him: but when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and straightway there came out blood and water.

And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye also may believe.

For these things came to pass, that the scripture might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken. And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.

And after these things Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked of Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took away his body.

And there came also Nicodemus, he who at the first came to him by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb wherein was never man yet laid. There then because of the Jews' Preparation (for the tomb was nigh at hand) they laid Jesus.

Section 227 — Mary Magdalene and the Empty Tomb [John 20:1–18]

Now on the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, while it was yet dark, unto the tomb, and seeth the stone taken away from the tomb.

She runneth therefore, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid him.

Peter therefore went forth, and the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. And they ran both together: and the other disciple outran Peter, and came first to the tomb; and stooping and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in.

Simon Peter therefore also cometh, following him, and entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, that was upon his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself.

Then entered in therefore the other disciple also, who came first to the tomb, and he saw, and believed.

For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

So the disciples went away again unto their own home.

But Mary was standing without at the tomb weeping: so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and beholdeth Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth herself, and saith unto him in Hebrew, Rabboni; which is to say, Teacher.

Jesus saith to her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father: but go unto my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.

Mary Magdalene cometh and telleth the disciples, I have seen the Lord; and that he had said these things unto her.

Section 228 — The Appearance to the Disciples; Thomas [John 20:19–31]

When therefore it was evening, on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

And when he had said this, he showed unto them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord.

Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.

And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Jesus saith unto him, Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Many other signs therefore did Jesus in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name.

Section 229 — The Appearance on the Shore of Galilee [John 21:1–14]

After these things Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and he manifested himself on this wise.

There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples.

Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also come with thee. They went forth, and entered into the boat; and that night they took nothing.

But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach: yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

Jesus therefore saith unto them, Children, have ye aught to eat? They answered him, No.

And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea.

But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits off), dragging the net full of fishes.

So when they got out upon the land, they see a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now taken. Simon Peter therefore went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, the net was not rent.

Jesus saith unto them, Come and break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

Jesus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise.

This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was raised from the dead.

Section 230 — The Restoration of Peter [John 21:15–23]

So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

He saith to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Tend my sheep.

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

Now this he spake, signifying by what manner of death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; who also leaned back on his breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee?

Peter therefore seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

Section 231 — The Closing Word of the Evangelist [John 21:24–25]

This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true.

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Twenty-One

On the Soldiers Falling at Gethsemane

John's arrest narrative (Section 221) includes a detail found in no other Gospel: when Jesus identifies himself with the words *"I am he"* (*Egō eimi*), the entire band of soldiers — a Roman cohort of up to 600 men plus the Temple officers — falls backward to the ground. The detail is startling and has generated extensive discussion. At its most basic level it illustrates John's consistent theological point: Jesus is not arrested; he gives himself up. He controls the entire event. He asks twice whom they seek; he protects his disciples; he identifies the name of the servant (Malchus) whose ear Peter cuts off; and he rebukes Peter's violence with the language of the cup: *"The cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"* The cup language connects directly to the Synoptic Gethsemane prayer — John does not record the Gethsemane anguish, but this single sentence shows that he knows it.

On Pilate's Trial in John

John's account of the trial before Pilate (Sections 223–224) is by far the most extended of the four Gospels, presenting seven scenes alternating between Pilate's conversations with Jesus inside the Praetorium and his negotiations with the crowd outside. The structure is precise: outside (accusations), inside (conversation), outside (Barabbas), inside (scourging), outside (*Ecce Homo*), inside (source of authority), outside (judgment). The effect is to place Pilate perpetually between two worlds — the world of Roman political power and the world of divine truth — and to show him retreating from the latter under pressure from the former.

The interior conversations between Pilate and Jesus are the most theologically rich moments of the trial. Jesus's declaration — *"My kingdom is not of this world"* — does not mean his kingdom is irrelevant to the world but that its origin and character are different: it does not depend on human violence for its maintenance. Pilate's question — *"What is truth?"* — is among the most famous rhetorical questions in Western literature, spoken by a man who is in the presence of the one who has just described himself as the embodiment of truth (14:6: "I am… the truth") and who is about to condemn him. Pilate does not wait for an answer; he goes back out to the crowd.

The political pressure that finally breaks Pilate is not the crowd's religious objection (*"he made himself the Son of God"*) but the threat: *"If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."* The accusation of disloyalty to Caesar — in the volatile political climate of Pilate's prefecture — is the lever that moves him. John's presentation of Pilate as a man who knows the truth, fears it, and surrenders to political pressure anyway is one of the most psychologically acute portraits in the Gospel tradition.

On "It Is Finished"

Jesus's final word from the cross in John (Section 225) — *"It is finished"* (*Tetelestai*) — is a single word in Greek: *tetelestai*, the perfect passive of *teleō*, to complete or accomplish. The same root gives *teleios* (complete, perfect, mature — the word used in Matthew 5:48: "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect") and *telos* (end, goal, completion). *Tetelestai* is the perfect tense — the tense of completed action whose effects continue in the present — and it was used on

commercial receipts to mean "paid in full." The word is not the gasp of the exhausted but the declaration of the accomplished: the work given by the Father (17:4: "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do") is now complete.

John alone records that Jesus says this and then bows his head and gives up his spirit — in that order. He does not slump into death; he deliberately bows his head (as one laying down to rest) and delivers his spirit. The voluntary character of the death is John's consistent emphasis: *"No one taketh it away from me, but I lay it down of myself"* (10:18).

On the Piercing of the Side

The piercing of Jesus's side (Section 226) is unique to John and is one of the most discussed details in the Passion narrative. John insists on its eyewitness authenticity: *"he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true."* The outflow of blood and water has been interpreted medically (hemopericardium, with serum and blood separating after death), theologically (blood and water as signs of the sacraments of the Eucharist and baptism), and eschatologically (drawing on Zechariah 12:10: "they shall look on him whom they pierced," quoted in Section 226). John applies two scriptures: Psalm 34:20 (*"A bone of him shall not be broken"*, originally about the Passover lamb, Exodus 12:46) and Zechariah 12:10.

The appearance of Nicodemus at the burial (Section 226) — bringing a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes for the burial wrappings — is John's final narrative of the man who came to Jesus by night in John 3. He has appeared three times: in the night conversation of John 3; as a dissenting voice in the Sanhedrin of John 7; and now, openly, at the cross, in the full light of day. His trajectory from secrecy to public confession is one of John's most carefully constructed character arcs.

On Mary Magdalene in the Garden

The appearance of the risen Jesus to Mary Magdalene (Section 227) is the most intimate resurrection appearance in any of the four Gospels. Mary stands weeping outside the empty tomb after Peter and the Beloved Disciple have come and gone. She sees the angels, speaks with them, turns, sees Jesus, and does not recognize him — supposing him to be the gardener. The single word that opens her eyes is her name: *"Mary."* She turns and says *"Rabboni"* — the heightened form of "Teacher," the same word used by Bartimaeus in Mark 10:51. The recognition is accomplished by a voice, not by sight — which is precisely what the Good Shepherd discourse had promised: *"the sheep hear his voice… and he calleth his own sheep by name"* (10:3).

Jesus's instruction — *"Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto the Father"* — has puzzled interpreters. The most natural reading is that Mary is trying to hold him, to prevent the loss of him again, and Jesus redirects her: the relationship with him is now to be constituted differently, not by physical proximity but by the Spirit. Her mission is the same mission given to the women in the Synoptics: go and tell the brethren.

On Thomas

The encounter with Thomas (Section 228) is the Fourth Gospel's ultimate Christological confession. Thomas's condition — seeing the nail-prints, touching the wound — is one of the most honest expressions of grief-driven skepticism in the Gospel tradition. When Jesus appears and offers exactly what Thomas demanded, Thomas does not need to touch. He sees, and the confession breaks from him entire: *"My Lord and my God"* (*Ho Kyrios mou kai ho Theos mou*) — the highest explicit Christological confession in the canonical Gospels. No other human character in any Gospel addresses Jesus directly as God.

Jesus's final beatitude — *"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"* — is addressed not to Thomas but to all subsequent generations of believers, including the readers of the Gospel. Thomas believed because he saw; the Gospel was written that others might believe without seeing.

The purpose statement of John 20:30–31 — *"these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name"* — is the Gospel's own declaration of its aim. It is the hermeneutical key to the entire Fourth Gospel: everything was selected and shaped for the purpose of generating and sustaining saving faith.

On the Restoration of Peter

The threefold restoration of Peter (Section 230) is one of the most structurally precise and emotionally resonant scenes in the Gospel tradition. Peter denied Jesus three times around a fire of coals (*anthrakia*, John 18:18); now he is restored three times beside a fire of coals (*anthrakia*, John 21:9) — John uses the word *anthrakia* only twice in the entire Gospel, in these two scenes. The structural parallel is unmistakable: the charcoal fire of the denial is answered by the charcoal fire of the restoration.

The Greek of the exchange is more nuanced than any English translation captures. In the first two questions, Jesus uses *agapaō* (the love of full commitment); in each, Peter answers with *phileō* (the love of affection and friendship). In the third question, Jesus descends to Peter's own word and asks *"Lovest thou me?"* using *phileō*. Peter is grieved — not at the repetition but at what the repetition implies: does Jesus doubt even the lesser love? His answer is now entirely thrown on Jesus's knowledge: *"Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."* He cannot claim the higher love; he can only appeal to Jesus's own omniscience.

To each confession corresponds a commission: feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep. The shepherd who denied his Lord is restored to the shepherding of the Lord's flock. And the word with which the commission closes is the same word with which the call began in the Synoptic Gospels, on the shore of this same sea, beside other nets: *"Follow me."*

On the Closing Word of the Evangelist

The final two verses of John's Gospel (Section 231) are the evangelist's own closing witness. He has selected from an unimaginably larger store: *"if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."* The hyperbole is not false modesty; it is a statement about the nature of what has happened. The life of Jesus,

fully narrated with all its implications worked out, is larger than any book, any library, any world of discourse.

The harmony ends here — at the edge of what can be written, looking toward what cannot be contained.

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A Final Note: The Harmony Complete

This harmony has now covered all four Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — across twenty-one chapters and 231 sections, from *"In the beginning was the Word"* and *"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ"* to *"even the world itself would not contain the books that should be written."*

The translation used throughout has been the **American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901**, which is entirely in the public domain and may be reproduced without restriction.

The four evangelists remain four distinct and irreducible voices even in harmony. Matthew sees every event through the lens of Old Testament prophecy fulfilled. Mark moves with urgent, eyewitness immediacy. Luke writes as a careful historian with profound attention to the poor, to women, and to the outsider. John reflects from a depth of theological contemplation that sees the eternal meaning shining through every temporal event.

Together they do not tell four stories. They tell one story through four irreplaceable perspectives — which is the shape of all genuine witness to events that are larger than any single account can contain, and to a Person who exceeds what any book, or any world of books, could hold.

Chapter Twenty-Two

Acts 1–9 — The Ascension; Pentecost; Stephen's Martyrdom; The Conversion of Saul

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Part Twenty-One: From Jerusalem to the Ends of the Earth

Section 232 — The Ascension and the Promise [Acts 1:1–11]

The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through

the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God.

And being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye heard from me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?

And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

Section 233 — Matthias Chosen; The Upper Room [Acts 1:12–26]

Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off.

And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James.

These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, and said (and there was a multitude of persons gathered together, about a hundred and twenty), Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus.

And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen, to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place.

And they gave lots for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Section 234 — Pentecost: The Coming of the Holy Spirit [Acts 2:1–13]

And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language.

And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galilaeans? And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born?

And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

Section 235 — Peter's Pentecost Sermon [Acts 2:14–41]

But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth unto them, saying, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words.

For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but the third hour of the day; but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel:

And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams.

Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay: whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do?

And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.

Section 236 — The Life of the Jerusalem Community [Acts 2:42–47]

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need.

And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people.

And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved.

Section 237 — The Healing at the Beautiful Gate [Acts 3:1–26]

Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple.

And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them.

But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.

And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

And all the people saw him walking and praising God: and they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

And Peter, seeing it, answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk?

The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him.

But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

And his name, by faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Section 238 — Before the Sanhedrin; They Could Not Deny It [Acts 4:1–31]

And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow: for it was now eventide.

But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem.

And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power, or in what name, have ye done this?

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole.

He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner.

And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

But seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done.

And they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said unto them. And when they heard it, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: and now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word

with all boldness, while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus.

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

Section 239 — Ananias and Sapphira [Acts 5:1–11]

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it.

And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much.

But Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out.

And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost.

And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

Section 240 — The Stoning of Stephen [Acts 6:1–7:60]

And in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people.

But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called the synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen; and they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake.

Then they suborned men, who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council.

But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.

And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Section 241 — The Scattering and Philip in Samaria [Acts 8:1–25]

And Saul was consenting unto his death.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him.

But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.

They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word.

And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. For from many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. And there was much joy in that city.

Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

Section 242 — Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch [Acts 8:26–40]

But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. And he arose and went.

And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.

And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him.

Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this:

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb, So he openeth not his mouth.

And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other?

And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus.

And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing.

Section 243 — The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus [Acts 9:1–19]

But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man.

And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight.

But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem.

And the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel.

And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized.

Section 244 — Peter in Lydda and Joppa; Cornelius Awaits [Acts 9:32–43]

And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda.

And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose.

Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber.

Now as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us.

And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. And he gave her his hand, and raised her up.

And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Twenty-Two

On Acts as the Continuation of Luke

Acts is not a separate book accidentally attached to Luke's Gospel; it is the second volume of a two-part historical work designed as a unity. The structural parallels between Luke and Acts are extensive and deliberate. Luke's Gospel begins in Jerusalem with Zechariah in the Temple; Acts ends in Rome with Paul preaching boldly without hindrance. The Spirit who comes upon Mary at the Annunciation (Luke 1:35) comes upon the entire community at Pentecost (Acts 2). Jesus's programmatic sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:18–19, citing Isaiah 61) — *"to preach good tidings to the poor… to set at liberty them that are bruised"* — is fulfilled in the community's life described in Acts 2:42–47 and 4:32–35. The Great Commission's geographical outline — Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8) — serves as the structural skeleton of the entire book of Acts.

On Pentecost

The feast of Pentecost (Section 234) — *Shavuot* in Hebrew, the Feast of Weeks, occurring fifty days after Passover — was in Second Temple Judaism associated with the giving of the Law at Sinai. The descent of the Spirit at Pentecost is Luke's presentation of the new covenant counterpart to Sinai: where God gave the Law written on stone tablets, now he writes his law on human hearts through the Spirit (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:26–27). The sound of rushing wind recalls the divine breath of Ezekiel 37 (the valley of dry bones coming to life); the tongues of fire recall the divine fire at Sinai (Exodus 19:18). The reversal of Babel (Genesis 11) — where language was divided and peoples scattered — is enacted in the miracle of speaking in every language simultaneously.

The three thousand baptized at Peter's sermon (Section 235) is the fulfillment of the harvest imagery Jesus used in Luke 10:2 (Section 121 of this harmony): *"The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few."* The laborers who prayed for harvest have now entered it.

On the Jerusalem Community

The description of the Jerusalem community's common life (Section 236) — *"they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers"* — is the most compressed portrait of early Christian community life in the New Testament. The four elements (teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayers) are not a formal liturgical program but a description of a community organized around the resurrected Lord's continuing presence. The selling of possessions and distribution according to need (2:44–45) echoes the Sermon on the Mount's teaching on treasure and the parable of the Rich Fool — the community is practicing, collectively, what Jesus taught individually.

On Peter's Sermon and Christology

Peter's Pentecost sermon (Section 235) is the first formal Christian proclamation in history and establishes the pattern that all subsequent apostolic preaching in Acts will follow: Jesus of Nazareth was attested by signs and wonders; he was crucified by lawless men according to God's determinate plan; God raised him from the dead; he is now exalted to the right hand of God and

has poured out the Spirit; therefore repent and be baptized. The conclusion — *"God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified"* — is the first explicit post-resurrection proclamation of Jesus's lordship. The claim combines Psalm 110:1 (Lord) and Psalm 2:2 (Christ/Anointed) — the same two texts Jesus had woven together in his unanswerable question to the Pharisees in Matthew 22:41–46 (Section 150 of this harmony).

On Stephen's Martyrdom

Stephen's death (Section 240) is the first martyrdom in the life of the church and mirrors the death of Jesus in deliberate detail: the false witnesses (as at Jesus's trial before the Sanhedrin), the charge of blasphemy, the vision of the Son of Man (echoing Jesus's own words to the Sanhedrin in Matthew 26:64), and the dying prayer — *"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge"* — which directly echoes Jesus's prayer from the cross: *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34, Section 178 of this harmony). Stephen dies as Jesus died — the first in what will become a long line of those who follow their Lord not merely in teaching and healing but in the manner of their death.

The young man Saul at whose feet the witnesses laid their garments — introduced here as a minor detail — will become the central figure of the second half of Acts and the most important individual in the history of the early church.

On Philip and the Ethiopian

The encounter of Philip with the Ethiopian eunuch (Section 242) is among the most theologically significant episodes in Acts. The eunuch is reading Isaiah 53 — the Servant Song — and cannot understand of whom the prophet speaks. Philip, beginning from this scripture, *"preached unto him Jesus."* This is the interpretive key to the entire Isaian Servant tradition as the early church read it: the Servant who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, who opened not his mouth, who was taken in his humiliation — is Jesus. The eunuch's immediate response — *"Behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"* — and his baptism in the road represent the first recorded Gentile (or near-Gentile, since he was a worshipper at Jerusalem) conversion in Acts. The gospel is already moving beyond the boundaries of Israel.

On the Conversion of Saul

The conversion of Saul on the Damascus road (Section 243) is narrated three times in Acts (here in chapter 9, and again in Saul's own testimony in chapters 22 and 26) — a repetition that signals its importance as the pivotal event of the second half of the book. Saul is introduced in Acts 7 at Stephen's stoning; the connection is intentional. The persecutor of the church becomes its greatest missionary. The man who held the garments of Stephen's murderers will himself be stoned at Lystra (Acts 14:19) and will eventually die for the same faith he attempted to destroy.

The voice from heaven — *"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"* — contains the most important theological statement in the conversion account: the identification of Christ with his church. Saul has been persecuting individual Christians; the risen Jesus takes the persecution as directed against himself. This is the Pauline doctrine of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–27) expressed not as theology but as experience — the moment of Paul's conversion is simultaneously the moment of his deepest theological education.

The description of Saul's commission — *"he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel"* — maps exactly onto the outline of the second half of Acts: the Gentile mission, the appearances before kings (Agrippa in Acts 26), and the continued engagement with Israel in every city Paul visits.

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Part Twenty-Two: The Gentile Mission and the Spread of the Gospel

Section 245 — Cornelius and Peter: The Gentiles Receive the Spirit [Acts 10:1–48]

Now there was a certain man in Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.

He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius. And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter.

Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour: and he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance; and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven.

And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. And a voice came unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. And this was done thrice: and straightway the vessel was received up into heaven.

Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood before the gate.

So Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him.

The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all) — that saying ye yourselves know, which was published throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Section 246 — Peter's Defense Before Jerusalem [Acts 11:1–18]

Now the apostles and the brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

But Peter began, and expounded the matter unto them in order.

When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.

Section 247 — The Church at Antioch; Barnabas and Saul [Acts 11:19–30]

They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus.

And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord.

And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

And Barnabas went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Section 248 — The First Missionary Journey: Cyprus and Galatia [Acts 13:1–52]

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews.

Now it came to pass in Iconium that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed.

And it came to pass at Lystra, that a certain man sat, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. The same heard Paul speaking: who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked.

And when the multitudes saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker.

And the priests of Jupiter whose temple was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes. But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is.

And they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

Section 249 — The Jerusalem Council [Acts 15:1–35]

And certain men came down from Judaea and taught the brethren, saying, Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, the brethren appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them.

But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses.

And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter.

And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should

put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they.

And after they held their peace, Barnabas and Paul rehearsed what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them.

And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Brethren, hearken unto me: Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

After these things I will return, And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; And I will build again the ruins thereof, And I will set it up: That the residue of men may seek after the Lord, And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called.

Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Gentiles turn to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood.

Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; and they wrote thus by them:

The apostles and the elder brethren unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.

Section 250 — The Second Missionary Journey Begins: The Call to Macedonia [Acts 16:1–15]

And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess that believed; but his father was a Greek.

And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem.

And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

And we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a Roman colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days.

And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there.

Section 251 — The Philippian Jailer [Acts 16:16–40]

And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying.

The same following after Paul and us cried out, saying, These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation.

And Paul, being sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour.

But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

And the jailor, being roused out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house.

And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately.

Section 252 — Athens: Paul on the Areopagus [Acts 17:16–34]

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols.

So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with them that met him.

And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What would this babbler say? Others, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached Jesus and the resurrection.

And they took hold of him, and brought him unto the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee?

And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you.

The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again.

But certain men clave unto him, and believed: among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Section 253 — Corinth: A Year and a Half [Acts 18:1–17]

After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth.

And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he

came unto them; and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tentmakers.

And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks.

But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city.

And he dwelt there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Appendix: Notes on Chapter Twenty-Three

On the Cornelius Episode as the Theological Turning Point

The conversion of Cornelius (Section 245) is the most theologically decisive episode in Acts after Pentecost, and Luke signals its importance by narrating it twice — once as the event itself (chapter 10) and once as Peter's report to Jerusalem (chapter 11). Peter's vision of the sheet containing unclean animals is not primarily about food laws; it is about people. The principle — *"What God hath cleansed, make not thou common"* — is applied immediately to his willingness to enter the house of a Gentile.

The outpouring of the Spirit on Cornelius's household before they are baptized is the critical detail. The Spirit does not wait for circumcision, nor for baptism, nor for formal admission into the Jewish covenant community. God has acted sovereignly, and Peter draws the only possible conclusion: *"Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?"* The order — Spirit, then water — reverses the expected pattern and makes the point unmistakably: the Gentiles are already inside the covenant by divine initiative. Baptism ratifies what God has already done.

Peter's summary of the gospel to Cornelius's household (Section 245) is the fullest Petrine proclamation in Acts and the closest parallel to the Synoptic Gospel narrative: Jesus of Nazareth, anointed with the Holy Spirit and power, who went about doing good and healing all oppressed of the devil, crucified on a tree, raised on the third day, appearing to chosen witnesses who ate and drank with him after the resurrection, now ordained as Judge of living and dead, through

whose name everyone who believes receives forgiveness of sins. This is a condensed Acts narrative of everything the Synoptic harmony has covered.

On the Jerusalem Council as the First Church Council

The Jerusalem Council (Section 249) is the first formal theological assembly in church history and the model for all subsequent councils. Its structure anticipates the later ecumenical councils: a presenting controversy, formal gathering of recognized authorities, extended debate, testimony from experience (Peter's Cornelius account, Paul and Barnabas's missionary signs), scriptural argument (James's citation of Amos 9:11–12), and a formal decision communicated to the wider community in writing.

Peter's summary of the council's theological basis — *"we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they"* — is one of the most important single sentences in Acts. It applies the Gentile principle universally: if the Gentiles are saved by grace through faith alone, then so are the Jews. The Council's decision does not merely open the door to the Gentiles; it clarifies the basis on which everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, stands before God.

James's quotation of Amos 9:11–12 — *"I will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen"* — applied to the Gentile inclusion is a remarkable piece of scriptural reasoning. James reads the restoration of David's fallen tent as the eschatological gathering of the nations under the name of the Lord — happening now in the Gentile mission. This hermeneutical move (reading Israel's restoration promises as fulfilled in the mixed Jewish-Gentile community of believers) is the exegetical foundation of Paul's later argument in Romans 9–11.

On the Call to Macedonia

The Macedonian vision (Section 250) — *"Come over into Macedonia, and help us"* — is the moment the gospel enters Europe, and Luke marks it with a subtle narrative shift. At Acts 16:10, the narrative pronoun changes from "they" to "we": *"we sought to go forth into Macedonia."* The "we passages" in Acts (16:10–17; 20:5–21:18; 27:1–28:16) are widely understood as indicating that Luke himself was present for these sections of the journey — a traveling companion of Paul who provides firsthand eyewitness detail. The call to Macedonia and the response to it is the moment the church's first historian enters the story he is telling.

Lydia of Thyatira (Section 250) — a dealer in purple cloth, a God-fearer, whose heart the Lord opened — is the first recorded convert in Europe. The first European church begins not in a synagogue or a marketplace but beside a river outside the city, in a prayer meeting attended by women.

On the Philippian Jailer

The midnight earthquake at Philippi (Section 251) produces the most concentrated evangelistic exchange in Acts: *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved? … Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house."* The jailer who had cast Paul and Silas into the inner prison with their feet in stocks has heard them singing hymns at midnight; when the earthquake opens every cell and loosens every bond, he expects to find his prisoners escaped and prepares to die. Paul's voice in the darkness — *"Do thyself no harm: for we are all here"* — is the first act of grace toward the man who will be baptized before dawn.

The episode illustrates a pattern that runs throughout Acts: persecution that should suppress the gospel becomes instead the occasion for its spread. Paul and Silas in prison singing hymns are more effective evangelists than Paul and Silas in freedom. The chains that should silence the message amplify it.

On the Areopagus Speech

Paul's speech on the Areopagus (Section 252) is the most philosophically sophisticated proclamation in Acts and the model for Christian engagement with Greco-Roman intellectual culture. Unlike his synagogue sermons — which begin from Moses and the prophets — the Areopagus speech begins from creation, moves to the nature of God, draws on Greek poetry (*"For we are also his offspring"*, from Aratus and Cleanthes), and arrives at the resurrection only at the conclusion.

The unknown God inscription is Paul's rhetorical bridge: Athens has left a gap in its theology — an acknowledgment that the divine exhausts human naming — and Paul claims that gap for the God of Israel and Father of Jesus Christ. The speech demonstrates that the God who created the world cannot be contained in temples made with hands, has not left himself without witness in human experience and poetry, and has now made himself fully known in the resurrection of a specific man.

The Athenian response at the resurrection — some mock, some delay, some believe — is the characteristic threefold response to the gospel throughout Acts. Paul leaves Athens with a small church: Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others. The seeds sown on the Areopagus will grow in ways neither Paul nor Luke anticipates.

On the Year and a Half at Corinth

The extended stay at Corinth (Section 253) — a year and six months, the longest single stay recorded in Acts before the Jerusalem imprisonment — produces the community to which Paul's two longest and most theologically complex letters will be addressed. Corinth was among the most cosmopolitan cities in the Roman world: a major commercial hub, newly rebuilt as a Roman colony, with a population drawn from across the empire and a reputation for every form of moral complexity. The church Paul plants there will become, in his letters, the testing ground for nearly every theological and ethical question the early church faces.

Aquila and Priscilla — tentmakers from Rome, expelled by Claudius's edict, who will become two of Paul's most important co-workers — are introduced here. Their home in Corinth is the base of Paul's ministry; their subsequent homes in Ephesus and Rome will become house churches. The Lord's night vision to Paul — *"Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city"* — is both reassurance and revelation: the church at Corinth already exists in the divine purpose before a single Corinthian has believed.

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Part Twenty-Three: Paul's Third Journey, Imprisonment, and Arrival in Rome

Section 254 — Ephesus: Two Years in the Hall of Tyrannus [Acts 19:1–41]

And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples: and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they said unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given. And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out.

And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no little business unto the craftsmen; whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth. And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they that are made with hands are no gods: and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account.

And the city was filled with the confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel.

And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

Section 255 — Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem [Acts 21:17–36]

And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles through his ministry.

And they, when they heard it, glorified God; and they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them that have believed; and they are all zealous for the law.

Now when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place.

And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut.

And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul.

Section 256 — Paul Before Agrippa [Acts 26:1–29]

And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defence.

I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defence before thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews: especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

My manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king! Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?

I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which things I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. And punishing them ofttimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities.

Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the goad.

And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me.

Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.

Section 257 — The Voyage, the Shipwreck, and Rome [Acts 27:1–28:31]

And when it was determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan band.

And when much time was spent, and the voyage was now dangerous, because the Fast was now already gone by, Paul admonished them, and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives.

But the centurion gave more heed to the master and to the owner of the ship, than to those things which were spoken by Paul.

But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven to and fro in the sea of Adria, about midnight the sailors surmised that they were drawing near to some country.

But Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee.

And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to the land.

And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. And the barbarians showed us no common kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us all, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out by reason of the heat, and fastened on his hand. When the barbarians saw the beast hanging from his hand, they said one to another, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped from the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live. Howbeit he shook off the beast into the fire, and took no harm.

And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery: unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him.

And Paul abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

Part Twenty-Four: A Complete Textual Analysis of Variances and Apparent Contradictions

I. Introduction: Manuscripts, Text Types, and the State of the Evidence

Any serious engagement with the four Gospels must address the question that the preceding twenty-three chapters of harmonization inevitably raises: Where do the accounts differ from one another, and how significant are those differences? The question has two dimensions — textual and narratological — and they must be carefully distinguished.

The **textual** question concerns differences among the ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament themselves. No original autographs of any New Testament book survive. What exists are approximately 5,800 Greek manuscripts ranging from tiny papyrus fragments to large vellum codices, spanning from the second to the fifteenth century. These manuscripts differ from one another in thousands of places, ranging from trivial spelling variations to occasional substantive differences in wording or content.

The **narratological** question concerns differences between the accounts of the evangelists themselves as they wrote — cases where Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John describes the same event differently, presents events in a different order, or includes or omits details that create apparent tension with one another.

The Major Text Traditions

Three manuscript traditions are relevant to this analysis:

The Critical Text (CT) — represented by the Nestle-Aland 28th edition (NA28) and the United Bible Societies 5th edition (UBS5) — is the scholarly reconstruction of the earliest attainable Greek text, based primarily on the oldest manuscripts: Papyri 45, 46, 47, 66, 75; Codex Sinaiticus (א, 4th century); Codex Vaticanus (B, 4th century); Codex Alexandrinus (A, 5th century); and others. The Critical Text forms the basis of most modern translations: ESV, NASB, NIV, NLT, NRSV, RSV.

The Byzantine Majority Text (MT/BYZ) — represented by the work of Maurice Robinson and William Pierpont (*The New Testament in the Original Greek: Byzantine Textform*, 2005) — reflects the text preserved in the majority of surviving Greek manuscripts, which are predominantly Byzantine in character and date from the 5th century onward. The Majority Text forms the basis of the King James Bible's underlying Greek text (the Textus Receptus) and is preferred by scholars including Wilbur Pickering and Harry Sturz.

The Textus Receptus (TR) — the printed Greek text compiled by Erasmus (1516), Stephanus (1550), and Beza (1598), and used by the KJV translators. It is largely Byzantine in character but contains some readings found in no Greek manuscript, apparently back-translated from the Latin Vulgate.

The ASV used throughout this harmony was based on the Westcott-Hort critical text (1881), which is closely related to the modern Critical Text. Where the ASV's wording differs from what the Majority Text would produce, this analysis notes the difference.

II. Major Textual Variants Between the Critical Text and Majority Text

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:13)

The Variant: The CT omits the doxology "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (*hoti sou estin hē basileia kai hē dynamis kai hē doxa eis tous aiōnas, amēn*). The MT includes it.

The Evidence: The doxology is absent from the oldest manuscripts (א, B, D, the Latin Vulgate, Origen, and Tertullian). It appears in the Didache (c. 50–120 C.E.) and in the majority of later Byzantine manuscripts. Most scholars regard it as a liturgical addition drawn from 1 Chronicles 29:11–13 that entered the manuscript tradition through liturgical use. Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:2–4) lacks the doxology in all manuscripts.

Verdict: The CT reading (omitting the doxology) has stronger manuscript support. The doxology is early (attested in the Didache) but was likely added to the text of Matthew from liturgical practice rather than being original to Matthew's Gospel.

Significance for the Harmony: Section 55 of this harmony (Chapter 6) presents the ASV text without the doxology, consistent with the CT. Readers using KJV or NKJV will find the doxology present.

Mark 16:9–20 (The Long Ending of Mark)

The Variant: The CT marks Mark 16:9–20 as non-original. The MT includes it as part of the canonical text. The ASV includes it with a marginal note.

The Evidence: Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus — the two oldest and most complete Greek New Testament manuscripts — both end Mark's Gospel at 16:8 with the words *"for they were afraid"* (*ephobounto gar*). Clement of Alexandria and Origen show no knowledge of verses 9–20. Eusebius and Jerome both note that the verses are absent from nearly all Greek manuscripts known to them. A shorter ending (a single sentence summarizing the resurrection proclamation) appears in some manuscripts between verse 8 and the longer ending.

The internal evidence is also significant: verses 9–20 introduce eleven words and phrases not found elsewhere in Mark's Gospel and several that appear inconsistent with Mark's style. The transition from verse 8 to verse 9 is grammatically awkward, with Mary Magdalene re-introduced as if she had not been mentioned in verse 1.

Verdict: The majority of textual critics regard Mark 16:9–20 as a later addition to Mark's Gospel, composed from materials in the other Gospels and early tradition, to provide a more complete ending than the abrupt verse 8. The ending was likely in circulation by the mid-second century, since Irenaeus appears to cite it.

Significance for the Harmony: Chapter 16 of this harmony (Section 185 and the Great Commission) draws on Matthew 28 and Luke 24 for the resurrection narratives rather than Mark 16:9–20, consistent with treating the Markan ending as secondary. The parallel Great

Commission language in Mark 16:15–18, included in Section 185, should be read with awareness of its textual status.

Luke 22:43–44 (The Angel and the Sweat of Blood)

The Variant: Luke 22:43–44 — *"And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground"* — is omitted by Papyrus 75, Codex Vaticanus, and a number of other significant witnesses. It is included in Sinaiticus and the Majority Text.

The Evidence: The passage's textual status is genuinely uncertain — more uncertain than the Mark 16 and Matthew 6:13 variants. Several considerations favor its authenticity: it is entirely consistent with Luke's distinctive interest in Jesus's prayer life and with his medical vocabulary (the term *thromboi*, clots); it was known to Justin Martyr (c. 155 C.E.); and its omission may be explained as theologically motivated (some scribes may have found the angel's strengthening of Jesus or the intensity of his anguish theologically difficult). On the other hand, the quality of manuscripts that omit it is high.

Verdict: Genuinely uncertain. The NA28 includes the verses but brackets them to indicate their disputed status. Most scholars tentatively regard them as authentic Lukan material, possibly omitted early from some manuscript streams due to theological concerns.

Significance for the Harmony: Section 171 (Chapter 15) includes the angel and the sweat as the ASV does, consistent with the majority of manuscript evidence.

John 7:53–8:11 (The Woman Taken in Adultery)

The Variant: The entire *Pericope Adulterae* (John 7:53–8:11) is absent from the oldest and most reliable manuscripts (Papyrus 66, Papyrus 75, Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, and many others). It appears in the Majority Text and in the Byzantine tradition but in various locations in different manuscripts.

The Evidence: This is the most extensively documented textual variant in the New Testament. The passage was discussed in Chapter 19 of this harmony (Section 203). The evidence against its Johannine origin is very strong: absent from early papyri, oldest vellum codices, early versions (Syriac Peshitta, early Coptic), and early fathers (Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian, Chrysostom). Its floating position in the manuscript tradition (it appears after John 7:36 in some manuscripts, after John 21:25 in others, and after Luke 21:38 in yet others) further suggests secondary insertion.

Verdict: The passage was almost certainly not part of John's original Gospel. It nevertheless preserves a genuine early tradition about Jesus (probably pre-Johannine, possibly even pre-canonical) and was included in Section 203 of this harmony for that reason, consistent with the practice of A.T. Robertson and most harmonists.

The Two Genealogies (Matthew 1 and Luke 3)

The Variant: Matthew traces Jesus's descent from Abraham through David and Solomon to Joseph. Luke traces descent from Joseph backward through David's son Nathan, then backward to Adam and God. Both name Joseph as Jesus's father (Matthew directly; Luke with the qualification "as was supposed").

This is a narratological variance, not a textual one — both texts are well-attested in their respective forms. The differences are:

1. Matthew follows the royal Davidic line through Solomon (1 Kings 1); Luke follows a different Davidic branch through Nathan (2 Samuel 5:14). This is not a contradiction if, as most harmonists from Julius Africanus onward have proposed, Matthew traces Joseph's legal ancestry and Luke traces Mary's biological descent (reckoned through Joseph as her husband per Jewish genealogical convention).

2. The names in the post-Davidic sections diverge almost entirely, sharing only Shealtiel and Zerubbabel. Two explanations have been offered: (a) the Julius Africanus theory of levirate marriage producing two legal lines; (b) the Mary's genealogy interpretation. Neither is demonstrable from the texts alone.

3. Matthew has three groups of fourteen generations; Luke has seventy-seven (or seventy-eight) names. The number of generations in Matthew has clearly been compressed (some names are demonstrably omitted from the Old Testament record, e.g., between Joram and Uzziah three kings are skipped: Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah).

Verdict: The two genealogies cannot be harmonized into a single unbroken line. They represent two different genealogical traditions, probably reflecting two different purposes: Matthew establishes Jesus's legal claim to the Davidic throne through Joseph's royal line; Luke establishes his biological connection to David (most likely through Mary) going back to Adam. Neither evangelist presents his genealogy as exhaustive; both are selective and purposeful.

III. Apparent Contradictions Between the Gospel Accounts

The Temptation Sequence (Matthew 4 vs. Luke 4)

The Variance: Matthew (4:1–11) presents the temptations in the order: (1) stones to bread, (2) pinnacle of the Temple, (3) all the kingdoms of the world. Luke (4:1–13) presents them in the order: (1) stones to bread, (2) all the kingdoms, (3) pinnacle of the Temple.

Analysis: Both Matthew and Luke agree on the first temptation; they reverse the order of the second and third. This is one of the clearest examples of a narratological variance in the Synoptic tradition and has been noted by commentators since antiquity. Several explanations have been proposed:

The most commonly accepted is that Luke has rearranged the sequence to end with the Jerusalem/Temple temptation, which serves his theological purpose of orienting the entire Gospel narrative toward Jerusalem (the city where Jesus will ultimately die). Matthew's

sequence may be the original order, ending with the climactic mountain vision and the decisive command "Get thee hence, Satan." Neither evangelist claims to present a chronological order; the Greek *tote* (then) in Matthew and *kai* (and) in Luke are not strict temporal markers. The Critical Text and Majority Text agree on the reading of both accounts; this is purely a narratological difference between two evangelists.

Verdict: Not a contradiction in the strict sense, but a deliberate authorial rearrangement by one evangelist (almost certainly Luke) for theological-literary purposes. Luke's arrangement serves his Jerusalem-centered narrative structure; Matthew's may reflect the historical sequence.

The Healing of the Centurion's Servant (Matthew 8 vs. Luke 7)

The Variance: In Matthew (8:5–13), the centurion approaches Jesus directly and speaks with him in person. In Luke (7:1–10), the centurion sends Jewish elders first, then a delegation of friends, and never appears himself.

Analysis: This is the most frequently cited Synoptic "contradiction" in introductory textbooks. The Critical Text and Majority Text are consistent within each Gospel account; the difference is between evangelists, not within manuscript traditions.

The standard harmonistic resolution is that Matthew compresses the account by attributing the centurion's words directly to him (since they were his words, expressed through intermediaries), following the common ancient convention of authorial attribution. The same convention is found in the Old Testament (compare 2 Samuel 12:27 with 2 Samuel 12:26, where Joab sends a message to David that is attributed directly to Joab rather than through a messenger). Matthew is not claiming the centurion was physically present; he is summarizing the centurion's communication.

The more critical alternative reading is that Matthew and Luke are drawing on the same Q-source account but have each shaped it independently, and the "contradictions" reflect their distinct editorial hands rather than eyewitness discrepancy.

Verdict: The difference is real but does not constitute a logical contradiction. An ancient author attributing words spoken through intermediaries directly to their speaker was standard historiographical practice. Luke's fuller account supplies the detail of intermediaries that Matthew omits in his compression.

The Cursing of the Fig Tree (Matthew 21 vs. Mark 11)

The Variance: In Matthew (21:18–22), Jesus curses the fig tree and it withers immediately (*"straightway the fig tree withered away"*), the disciples see it wither immediately, and they express amazement immediately. In Mark (11:12–14, 20–24), Jesus curses the fig tree on Monday morning; the disciples find it withered on Tuesday morning. The discovery and the teaching on faith follow the next morning.

Analysis: This is Mark's characteristic intercalation technique (the "Markan sandwich") — he places the Temple cleansing between the cursing of the tree (Monday) and the disciples'

discovery of the withered tree (Tuesday). Matthew compresses the two events into a single scene. Wilbur Pickering and other Majority Text advocates do not find a different reading in the Byzantine tradition; the difference exists equally in both text types.

The Greek of Matthew 21:20 — *"and when the disciples saw it, they marvelled"* — does not require that they saw it wither at the moment of the curse; it can mean they saw the withered tree (the following morning) and marvelled. Matthew has compressed two mornings into a single pericope by omitting the intervening Temple cleansing, which he narrates separately (21:12–17, before the fig tree episode).

Verdict: A clear instance of Matthean compression. Mark's two-day sequence is historically more detailed; Matthew's single-scene narration sacrifices chronological precision for narrative economy. Not a genuine contradiction.

Peter's Denial: How Many Cock Crows? (Mark 14 vs. Matthew, Luke, John)

The Variance: Mark 14:30 and 14:72 specifically mention the cock crowing *twice* (*dis*): *"before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice"*, and *"the cock crew the second time."* Matthew 26:34, 74; Luke 22:34, 60; and John 13:38; 18:27 all refer simply to the cock crowing, without specifying "twice."

The Textual Dimension: The Critical Text (NA28) retains *dis* (twice) in Mark 14:30 and 14:72. The Majority Text also retains *dis* in both verses. However, some manuscripts of Mark 14:68 — particularly Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus, and Papyrus 45 — omit the phrase *"and the cock crew"* after Peter's first denial. The TR includes it. This creates an internal tension within Mark: if the cock crows after the first denial (14:68) and again after the third (14:72), the sequence of "twice" is coherent. If 14:68's crowing is omitted (as in the oldest manuscripts), the internal Markan sequence is harder to reconstruct.

The Narratological Dimension: The simplest explanation is that Mark — consistently the most detailed and most eyewitness-flavored of the Synoptics — preserves the specific detail of two cock-crows that the other evangelists omit. The tradition of Petrine source material behind Mark (attested by Papias, c. 130 C.E.) makes it plausible that Peter himself remembered the detail of two crows as particularly significant — perhaps because the first crow, which Matthew, Luke, and John do not mention, gave him a warning he failed to heed.

Verdict: No genuine contradiction between the evangelists. Mark specifies "twice"; the others simply say "the cock crew," which is consistent with a cock having crowed twice (one crow is the minimum implied). The textual variant within Mark 14:68 is the more technically interesting problem; the CT omission of the first crow in 14:68 creates a modest internal Markan tension.

The Inscription on the Cross

The Variance: All four Gospels record that an inscription was placed on the cross identifying Jesus. The wording differs:

Matthew 27:37: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS

Mark 15:26: THE KING OF THE JEWS

Luke 23:38: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS

John 19:19: JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS

John 19:20 notes that the inscription was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. The variations across the four Gospels may reflect (a) different translations of the trilingual inscription, each evangelist translating the Latin or Hebrew version into Greek slightly differently; (b) summarizing paraphrase by different evangelists; or (c) the natural variation of eyewitness recall of a brief text seen from a distance.

Textual note: The Critical Text and Majority Text are consistent within each Gospel; the differences are between evangelists, not within manuscript traditions.

Verdict: The core content is identical across all four: the charge is "King of the Jews," and the name Jesus is connected to it. The variations in phrasing are fully explicable as differing Greek renderings of a multilingual inscription and as characteristic authorial summaries. Augustine addressed this apparent discrepancy in the fourth century, noting that each evangelist preserved the substance without needing to report the exact wording of a text that existed in three languages.

The Women at the Tomb

The Variance: The accounts of the women who visit the tomb on the first day of the week differ across the Synoptics and John:

Matthew 28:1: Mary Magdalene and the other Mary

Mark 16:1: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome

Luke 24:10: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and others

John 20:1: Mary Magdalene (alone is mentioned; plural implied in "we know not" v.2)

The number and manner of the angels also varies:

Matthew 28:2–5: One angel, sitting on the rolled-away stone outside

Mark 16:5: A young man in white, sitting inside the tomb on the right side

Luke 24:4: Two men in dazzling apparel, standing inside

John 20:12: Two angels in white, sitting (one at the head, one at the foot)

Analysis: The women accounts are not contradictory but additive: each evangelist names the women he knows or chooses to emphasize. The women mentioned in one list are not said to be the only women present. Luke explicitly acknowledges "others" beyond those he names.

The angel/messenger accounts represent the most complex variance in the resurrection narratives. The Critical Text and Majority Text are consistent within each Gospel; the differences are between evangelists. Several observations:

1. An "angel" described as appearing like lightning (Matthew) and a "young man… clothed in a long white garment" (Mark) may be the same figure described through different but compatible lenses. Angelic beings in the Old Testament frequently appear in human form; "two men in dazzling apparel" (Luke) is consistent with two angelic beings appearing as men.

2. The different positions — one outside on the stone (Matthew), one inside on the right (Mark), two standing inside (Luke), two sitting at head and foot (John) — may reflect different moments in a sequence, different women's experiences, or different aspects of what was a complex and overwhelming event recalled with different emphases.

3. Matthew's account focuses on the angel who rolled away the stone and spoke to the women; Mark's and Luke's focus on what was seen and heard inside the tomb. John focuses on Mary's private experience after the others have left.

Verdict: The variations are real and do not dissolve into easy harmonization. They are, however, the kind of variation that characterizes multiple independent witnesses to the same complex event rather than the kind of flat contradiction that would make both accounts impossible simultaneously. No account explicitly denies the content of another. The variation is analogous to what one finds in multiple eyewitness accounts of any significant historical event.

The Post-Resurrection Appearances: Galilee vs. Jerusalem

The Variance: Matthew (28:7, 10, 16) directs the disciples to Galilee for the resurrection appearances; the great commission is given on a mountain in Galilee. Luke (24:49) and Acts 1:4 explicitly command the disciples to remain in Jerusalem and not depart until clothed with the Spirit. Luke's resurrection appearances all take place in or near Jerusalem: Emmaus, the upper room, the Mount of Olives (for the Ascension).

Analysis: This is frequently described as the most significant geographical tension in the resurrection narratives. Several reconciling observations:

1. Matthew does not say the appearances in Jerusalem did not occur; he emphasizes the Galilee appearances and the Galilean great commission. Luke emphasizes Jerusalem because his Gospel is structured around Jerusalem and because Acts opens in Jerusalem.

2. The appearances need not be mutually exclusive. The forty days of resurrection appearances described in Acts 1:3 are ample time for appearances both in Jerusalem and

in Galilee. Paul's summary in 1 Corinthians 15:5–8 lists multiple appearances without specifying their locations.

3. Luke 24:49 — "tarry ye in the city" — may refer to the period after the Galilean appearances, consistent with Acts 1, rather than to an absolute prohibition on leaving Jerusalem immediately after the resurrection.

Verdict: The tension is real and reflects the different narrative priorities and sources of Matthew and Luke. Both accounts preserve genuine tradition; neither is invented. The most historically satisfying reconstruction is a sequence of appearances: Jerusalem (the women, Peter, the Emmaus disciples, the eleven), then Galilee (the mountain, the Sea of Tiberias appearance in John 21), then Jerusalem again for the Ascension. Luke, writing his Gospel with Jerusalem as the theological center, selects the Jerusalem-centered appearances; Matthew, writing for a Galilean Jewish audience, emphasizes the Galilean great commission.

IV. Variances Between the Critical Text and Majority Text: A Summary Table

Passage	CT Reading	MT Reading	Significance
Matthew 6:13	Omits doxology	Includes doxology	Lord’s Prayer; liturgical addition likely
Matthew 17:21			

Omits verse (“this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting”)

Includes verse

Assimilation from Mark 9:29

Matthew 18:11

Omits verse (“For the Son of man came to save that which was lost”)

Includes verse

Assimilation from Luke 19:10

Matthew 23:14

Omits verse (“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses…”)

Includes verse

Assimilation from Mark 12:40 / Luke 20:47

Mark 1:2

“In Isaiah the prophet”

“In the prophets”

CT is likely original; MT corrects apparent error (Malachi is also cited)

Mark 9:44, 46

Omits repeated refrain (“where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched”)

Includes both refrains

Scribal assimilation to Mark 9:48

Mark 16:9–20

Brackets as later addition

Includes as canonical

Long ending of Mark — see Section II above

Luke 22:19b–20

Includes

Includes

No significant variant here

Luke 22:43–44

Brackets (angel and blood)

Includes

Genuinely uncertain — see Section II above

Luke 23:34a

“Father, forgive them” — omitted in some CT witnesses

Generally included

Internally disputed in CT; probably authentic

John 5:3b–4

Omits “waiting for the moving of the water… an angel… troubled the water”

Includes

Likely explanatory gloss added to John’s text

John 7:53–8:11

Brackets as non-Johannine

Includes

Pericope Adulterae — see Section II above

V. On the Charge of “Contradiction” in the Gospel Accounts

The variances documented above — both textual and narratological — are real. They cannot be dissolved by harmonistic ingenuity alone, nor should the attempt be made where the evidence does not support it. Honest engagement with the Gospel texts requires acknowledging that:

The evangelists were not stenographers. They were ancient historians writing selective, purposeful accounts of the life of Jesus for specific audiences and with specific theological emphases. Ancient historical writing did not require the kind of word-for-word precision that modern citation standards demand. Paraphrase, compression, expansion, and reordering for literary or theological purpose were standard and accepted practices.

The variations are mostly explicable. The differences catalogued above — in genealogies, temptation order, centurion’s approach, fig tree timing, cock crows, cross inscription, women at the tomb, and resurrection geography — are all the kind of variation that characterizes multiple

independent witnesses to real events. They are not the variations one would expect if the accounts were fabricated and coordinating their stories.

The Critical Text and Majority Text agree on the vast majority of the text. The two major Greek text traditions differ in approximately 1,500 places, of which roughly 500 are of any significance for translation or interpretation, and very few are theologically consequential. The major doctrines of the New Testament are not affected by the manuscript variants.

No variant changes the core narrative. The resurrection of Jesus is attested in all four Gospels and all manuscript traditions. The virgin birth, the baptism, the Sermon on the Mount, the crucifixion, the empty tomb — none of these is affected by any known textual variant. The variants documented above are real but marginal to the central claims of the Gospel tradition.

The strongest evidence for the Gospel narratives' historical reliability is the pattern of variation itself. Documents fabricated to coordinate and deceive tend to agree more perfectly than authentic accounts. The roughness, the variation, the occasional tension — these are the signature of multiple genuine witnesses reporting from their own perspectives and with their own emphases, not the signature of a well-edited forgery.

VI. Conclusion: The Harmony Assessed

This harmony of the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles has covered 24 chapters and 257 sections, from the Prologue of John ("In the beginning was the Word") and the genealogy of Matthew ("The book of the generation of Jesus Christ") through the missionary journeys of Paul and the final word of Acts: "preaching the kingdom of God… with all boldness, none forbidding him."

The Greek New Testament, examined in both its Critical Text and Majority Text forms, presents a tradition that is:

Multiply attested. The core events of Jesus's ministry, death, and resurrection are documented in at least three independent witnesses (Matthew, Mark, Luke), four when John is included, and five when Paul's letters are considered (1 Corinthians 15:3–8 contains a creedal statement that most scholars date to within five years of the crucifixion).

Internally coherent. The variances documented above are real but do not destroy the coherence of the overall narrative. The trajectory from the baptism of John through the ministry in Galilee, the turn toward Jerusalem, the passion, and the resurrection is consistent across all four Gospels and corroborated by Acts.

Textually reliable. The New Testament is the best-attested document of the ancient world by any measure of manuscript quantity, manuscript age, and proximity to the events described. No classical document approaches its manuscript attestation. The differences between the major text traditions are minor relative to the vast agreement between them.

Theologically demanding. The harmonization of these texts has required engagement with some of the most profound theological claims in human literature: the pre-existence of the Logos, the incarnation, the Sermon on the Mount's radicalization of ethics, the parables of grace,

the passion and resurrection, the commission to make disciples of all nations. The variances between the accounts do not diminish these claims; they authenticate the human witnesses through whom the claims have been transmitted.

The final verse of Acts — *"preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him"* — is not an ending. It is an open conclusion, a sentence without a period, because the story Acts narrates has not concluded. The harmony ends where Acts ends: with the gospel loose in the world, moving toward the uttermost part of the earth, none forbidding it.

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